

MEMO

Date: September 11, 2020

To: Circumpolar Inuit Health Steering Committee

From: Percy Ballot

Re: COVID-19 in Alaska summary & the Maniilaq Service Area

This data summary covers COVID-19 in Alaska from Sunday, August 30th through Saturday, September 5th, 2020.

Background

The Alaska COVID-19 Weekly Case Update will be composed every weekend with data from the previous week and the report will be published by the following Wednesday. Data are continually updated on the [Alaska Coronavirus Response Data Hub](#), which reflects the most current case counts. This summary presents data from the previous week and is a snapshot of the information available on known cases at the time.

Note: Our apologies for the delay with this week's weekly case update. We typically publish by Wednesday evening.

Highlights

- We continue to see new cases of COVID-19 in Alaska
- The largest increases in cases continue to be in Alaskans aged 20-29
- 14-day case rates are high and rising in Fairbanks North Star Borough and Anchorage Municipality
- The majority of new infections among Alaskans are from community spread, not from travel. Most Alaskans get the virus from someone they work, socialize, or go to school with.
- Many cases do not have a clear source, meaning that contact tracers have not been able to identify where the person got the virus. This could mean that there are cases in our communities that we do not know about.
- The predicted epidemic curve is still downtrending, but not as quickly as last week
- New nonresident cases are downtrending, which may be in part related to more nonresidents being tested for COVID-19 prior to travel to Alaska
- Many Alaskans who are diagnosed with COVID-19 report that they went to social gatherings, community events, church services and other social venues while they were contagious but before they knew they had the virus
- Cases disproportionately affect Alaska Native People and that proportion is rising; Alaskans who identify as Black or Pacific Islander are also disproportionately impacted although the numbers of people affected in these populations are smaller, making it more difficult to judge whether these differences will be statistically significant

- Hospital occupancy statewide remains steady
- Anyone with even one new symptom of COVID-19 (fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle aches, body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea), even if it is very mild, should get tested for COVID-19 right away. Tests are most accurate in the first few days of symptoms, and if the test is positive, getting tested right away helps contact tracers move as quickly as possible.
- Alaskans can help contact tracers work to slow the spread of COVID-19 by answering the phone promptly if contacted and providing accurate information.
- Alaskans should avoid gatherings, wear masks when around any non-household member, keep six feet of distance from anyone not in their household and wash hands frequently to slow community transmission of COVID-19.

New and recovered cases

This week saw 541 new cases in Alaskans and 21 in nonresidents, for a total of 5,765 and 891 respectively. Several cases previously classified as resident cases have since been reclassified as nonresident cases after further investigation took place. 17 additional Alaskans required hospitalization this week for COVID-19, for a total of 232 since the epidemic began. Five additional deaths were reported this week, for a total of 42. By convention, deaths are counted based on the residency of the patient rather than where they contracted the virus.

82 Alaskans are presumed to have recovered (either they have been confirmed by public health as recovered or they have completed 10 days of isolation) from COVID-19 this week, for a total of 2,121, or 37% of total cases.

Epidemic curve

This analysis projects growth or reduction in cases predicted in the coming weeks based on the growth of cases in recent weeks. The most recent 7 days (grey bars) are not included because there can be a delay in reporting data. This model assumes exponential growth or reduction in cases and can be a useful tool to visualize how quickly cases are increasing or decreasing. This curve does not project what might happen if more people start wearing masks or increase physical distancing; it assumes Alaskans and visitors to Alaska do not change their behavior. The dotted line is the average prediction, and the grey shaded area is estimated error for the predicted rise in cases. For a full description of methods, visit <https://coronavirus-response-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/>

Currently, cases are predicted to halve about every 210 days based on the current case trend, which is worse than the case trend of last week when cases were predicted to halve every 75 days. Keeping the case trend prediction downsloping will depend on a continued effort among Alaskans to slow the spread of transmission through physical distancing, masks and limiting contacts.

Maniilaq Service Aarea COVID-19 CASES SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

Overview

The Maniilaq Association works closely with other regional entities via a Unified Command group that is coordinated by the Northwest Arctic Borough (NWAB), to strategically address the prevention and containment of COVID-19 in the Maniilaq Service Area (MSA). The MSA 11 villages in the NWAB and the Native Village of Point Hope (which is technically in the North Slope Borough).

As of September 7, 2020, the summary of the Maniilaq Service Area (MSA) Covid-19 cases is as follows:

Total Cases:

- 73 cases
 - 68 residents
 - 5 nonresidents
-
- Travel related cases: 41 cases or 56% were related to travel
 - Community transmission: 15 cases or 21% were community transmission
 - Secondary transmission: 17 cases or 23% associated with a previous positive individual

Highlights of the COVID-19 cases Thursday, August 27 through Monday, September 7, 2020 are as follows:

- The Maniilaq Service Area had 4 new cases identified as area residents.
- The 4 new cases: 3 Kotzebue residents and 1 Selawik resident.
- All of these MSA residents are quarantined in Kotzebue or Anchorage.
- Hospital capacity is currently adequate.
- The current risk level for village communities is improving while Kotzebue continues to experience an increase in positive cases.
- Alaskans should avoid gatherings, wear face coverings in public, keep six feet of distance from non-household members and practice good hand hygiene to slow transmission of COVID-19.