

ASNA

ARCTIC SLOPE NATIVE ASSOCIATION



Public Service Announcement

March 17, 2020

Mission: Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of the people of the Arctic Slope.

Vision: The people of the Arctic Slope are healthy and content.

ASNA/SSMH Readiness and Information for novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

As your regional hospital, we at ASNA and SSMH are committed to the health and wellness of our patients, staff, and visitors. We are closely monitoring and following recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Federal/State offices. We want to share with you the following information.

What We Are Doing To Protect Patients

Everyone at SSMH is working together to help protect our patients.

- Limiting visitors: Limited hours, numbers, and age
- Infection Control: additional attention to cleaning public areas; implement federal guidelines.
- Patient and Visitor screenings setup at hospital entrances.
- Aimaagvik (Assisted Living Home): restricted visitation to protect our residents.
- Per National guidelines, the **Midnight Sun Coffee Shop** will be **temporarily CLOSED** effective Wednesday, March 18 at 5:00PM until further notice.

Important Steps for Hospital Patients and Visitors

To reduce risk of infection and exposure, we have implemented limited contact guidelines:

- Patient and visitor screenings at both entrances of the hospital.
- Restrictions on gathering areas: Gathering areas, such as the pharmacy, labor and delivery, vision, and dental clinic, are restricted to patients and their escorts. If you do



not need to be in these areas with exposure to other people, please avoid group settings.

- Hospital visitors are limited to two (2) healthy visitors in a patient room at a time. No visitors with flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, congestion) are permitted.
- No pregnant or immunocompromised visitors permitted.
- No visitors under age 12 permitted.
- All visitors must wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after visits.

Thank you for your understanding and support in keeping our patients and staff healthy!

Important Health Tips for COVID-19 Safety

1. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating; after going to the bathroom; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
4. Stay home when you are sick.
5. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
6. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
7. Check on Elders for their health needs and encourage anyone 60 and older to avoid large gatherings.
8. People with underlying health conditions or immunocompromised should also avoid large gatherings of people.
9. Continue healthy practices such as eating healthy foods, drinking water and managing stress.
10. Stay aware of [travel guidelines](#).

How to keep yourself and loved ones safe

What can you do to prevent the spread of respiratory infections?

- Keep at least 6 feet away from ill people who are coughing or sneezing (social distancing).
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. If you don't have soap and water, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- Try to avoid touching your face, mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Routinely clean frequently touched objects and surfaces, including toys, doorknobs, keyboards, and phones.
- If you begin to feel ill, stay home! Stay home for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines.



- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw away the tissue after use. If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into the inside of your elbow.
- If you think you have COVID-19, call ahead and make an appointment before seeing a clinician. This will help the health care provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed. When you call, make sure you tell the provider if you think you may have been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19, or being around someone with a case of the disease.

If you or a family member has flu-like symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath), or believe you may have been exposed to coronavirus, before you come to the hospital you should:

- Remain home and call **SSMH COVID-19 Hotline # 833.852.4622**. Calling ahead helps to determine the most appropriate care.
- **If you need to visit the SSMH Emergency Department with COVID-19 symptoms, call ahead for procedures to limit exposure to others:**
SSMH COVID-19 Hotline # 833.852.4622
- If you need immediate medical care, call 911 or your local emergency responders.
- Additional recommendations from the [CDC here](#).

The spread of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, continues to be a topic of great concern across the globe. While there are no confirmed cases at SSMH, we take this potential threat very seriously, and we remain engaged and are prepared to respond to treat the virus.

SSMH staff are working on all fronts to prepare for patients and to protect the Arctic Slope communities from COVID-19. We are working with state and local public health officials to prepare, obtain, and share the most current information. In the absence of other guidance, please contact Alaska 2-1-1 by phone for general questions.

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 are reported by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health. SSMH is prepared to treat and control the spread of infectious disease and is continuing to prepare to protect all SSMH patients.

We are prepared to care for patients with respiratory illness, and efforts are underway to ensure ongoing preparedness for COVID-19.

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19

How contagious and deadly is this virus?

While we still have much to learn about this new disease, it appears to be more contagious than the seasonal flu, but less transmissible than measles. Current research so far indicates that



each infected person transmits the virus to about 2.5 other people on average. The case fatality rate for this disease is not known as it is still early in the outbreak. Current data show that the case fatality is about 2–3%, but the actual case fatality rate may be lower because it's likely that many people with milder illness are not being identified as having the virus. For perspective, the estimated COVID-19 case fatality rate is considerably higher than seasonal flu (<0.1%), but lower than SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome, ≈10%).

Why is everyone bringing up influenza in the context of COVID-19?

- We are in the middle of influenza season, and influenza and COVID-19 are both respiratory viruses that can cause hospitalization and death.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that about 8% of the U.S. population gets the flu every year, resulting in hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and tens of thousands of deaths.
- Flu symptoms are similar to COVID-19 symptoms and require similar resources.
- Our health care system will be better able to manage a COVID-19 outbreak if we have fewer flu cases. Therefore, everyone over six months of age should get their annual flu vaccine if they haven't already done so. Vaccines can be arranged through your primary care provider. We encourage you to have this conversation with you provider. Seasonal influenza activity typically continues into April or May.

What else can you be doing to prepare for COVID-19?

- Stay informed. Follow updates from public health officials as well as from schools and your employer.
- Whether for a pandemic, a weather storm, or some other disaster, you should have an emergency kit. Include supplies like soap, hand sanitizer, and tissues. Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins. For more information about emergency kits, please see this information from CDC and this information from the Department of Homeland Security.
- While COVID-19 can be serious, many cases appear to have mild respiratory symptoms that do not require hospitalization. All patients suspected to have COVID-19 should be immediately put into isolation. This isolation might occur in a hospital or home setting, depending on available resources and the individual patient's situation.
- Some patients may be flown to hospitals elsewhere while others may be cared for within the community. Many people who contract COVID-19 do not get very sick and do not need to be hospitalized.
- Do your part to fight fear, stigma, and misinformation that can surface when people are anxious about a new disease.



Additional Resources on COVID-19:

Tribal partners: For Tribal partners who would like planning assistance, please contact COVID19plan@anthc.org ; <https://anthc.org/news/resources-coronavirus/>

Alaska Department of Health and Social

Services: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/Human-Coronavirus.aspx> ; www.coronavirus.alaska.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

General questions from the public: The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services has made 2-1-1 a resource for questions from the public regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 – COVID-19. If you are trying to reach any of our clinics to ask general questions about the Coronavirus, please call 2-1-1 for up-to-date information. If 2-1-1 does not work in your area, please call 1-800-478-2221.

Quyanaq!



7000 Uula Street
P.O. Box 1232
Utqiagvik, Alaska 99723

Local: 907.852.2762 Toll Free: 800.478.3033 SSMH COVID-19 Hotline: 833.852.4622

