

Press Release

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Second North Slope resident in the Arctic Slope Native Association Area tests positive for COVID-19

June 17, 2020 - Utqiagvik, Alaska: The Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) notified the Arctic Slope Native Association that a patient from the North Slope region has tested positive for COVID-19. The patient is currently receiving medical treatment at ANMC in Anchorage, and their family is in contact with State of Alaska Section of Epidemiology and North Slope Borough Public Health Nursing to ensure appropriate precautions are being taken within their home community. The specific community of residence is not being released at this time to protect the privacy of the patient.

The individual was tested early morning on June 16, 2020 at ANMC. Per CDC guidelines, the patient has received a confirmatory PCR test, which was negative, and will be given a second PCR test after 24 hours. The second PCR test is in process at ANMC. ASNA has been informed that when the individual receives a second negative PCR test, the State of Alaska will then update their reporting to show this as a “recovered case”. The State of Alaska maintains a statewide reporting system for COVID-19 activity and publishes report updates regularly. These reports can be accessed through the State of Alaska Coronavirus Response Hub at <https://coronavirus-response-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/>

The Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital (SSMH) rapid response team has been sent to help with community testing and respond to community questions.

SSMH activated its incident command structure on March 16 to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. SSMH is also working with the North Slope Borough

Emergency Operations Center and is communicating daily with regional community leaders.

This further emphasizes the importance of following recommendations of social distancing and safe hygiene practices. SSMH encourages anyone who must leave their home to wear a face covering in public (cloth mask, scarf, neck gaiter, etc.).

SSMH has recommendations for its regional patients experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Cough
- Fever
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- New-onset diarrhea
- Loss of smell or taste

If you are experiencing symptoms please contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 1-833-852-4622 with any questions. If you live in Utqiagvik, you may be able to use the Drive-thru testing option. If you are in a village, please contact your local clinic to arrange testing and notify clinic staff before your arrival. Testing is open to any individual requesting it, regardless of symptoms or travel history.

Please continue to follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for protecting yourself against COVID-19 by practicing social distancing and washing your hands frequently. More information on protecting yourself can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

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