

Press Release

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North Slope Resident in Anchorage tests positive for COVID-19

July 13, 2020 - Utqiagvik, Alaska: The North Slope Borough (NSB) Public Health Department notified ASNA that an Utqiagvik resident tested positive for COVID-19 in Anchorage. This individual was not seen or tested at SSMH. The NSB Public Health Nurse informed ASNA that the Utqiagvik resident was traveling home from the lower 48 states, tested in Anchorage, and the test detected the presence of COVID-19.

While the individual has been out of the region for an unknown time, per State of Alaska reporting protocols, the positive case will be counted as a North Slope case.

The NSB also informed ASNA that the individual is currently self-isolating in Anchorage and therefore, follow-up testing is being managed in Anchorage and the Alaska Section of Epidemiology will work collaboratively with North Slope Borough Public Health Nursing for contact tracing.

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 SSMH 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>

For additional precautionary information on travel safety guidelines, please follow the attached link from Alaska Airlines at <https://www.alaskaair.com/content/advisories/coronavirus>

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