

Press Release

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Four North Slope residents and one non-resident test positive for COVID-19

August 31, 2020 - Utqiagvik, Alaska: (New cases) Five (5) individuals tested positive for COVID-19. Four (4) are residents of the North Slope and one (1) is a non-resident who traveled to Utqiagvik. Three (3) of the individuals are residents of Utqiagvik and one (1) individual has returned to their place of residence in a North Slope community. The non-resident, traveler remains in Utqiagvik until cleared to return to their place of residence off-slope. All five (5) individuals are self-isolating at this time.

Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital and the North Slope Borough Health Department are in contact with the individuals, and will continue to provide monitoring. The North Slope Borough contact tracing team will continue to reach out to individuals who may have been exposed and will provide additional information on appropriate precautions. *The medical team at SSMH strongly recommends that residents participate in COVID-19 testing especially if experiencing symptoms. Individuals experiencing symptoms should call SSMH COVID hotline at 1-833-852-4622. Other recommendations to prevent the spread include: stay 6 feet apart from other people, limit social contact, wear a facemask in public, and wash hands frequently.*

(Recovered cases) Additionally, three (3) previously active cases in the Arctic Slope region are now considered recovered based on the State of Alaska and CDC guidelines.

Currently, there are nine (9) active cases in the Arctic Slope region; with cumulative 40 cases total to date for the North Slope Borough.

SSMH is committed to providing COVID-19 testing for anyone in the community who believes they may have been exposed, and encourages the community to continue practicing precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease. Please be aware that several North Slope communities have recently implemented travel restrictions. If you need testing prior to traveling, please contact the SSMH COVID-19 Hotline at 1-833-852-4622.

Testing is available at the airport for each in-bound Alaska Airlines flight, as well as drive-thru availability at the hospital Monday – Friday from 8am until 7pm. The tests are available with no out-of-pocket costs, and may be repeated every seven (7) days.