

Press Release

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18 Individuals test positive for COVID-19; FDA authorizes and CDC approves Pfizer Vaccine for Children ages 5-11

January 3, 2022 - Utqiagvik, Alaska: (New cases) Over the holiday weekend including 12pm today, the Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) was notified that eighteen (18) residents of Utqiagvik tested positive for COVID-19. One of the eighteen residents tested and is isolating off slope. **Anyone who is waiting for test results, please self-isolate until provided with negative results.**

(Recovered cases) Six (6) individuals have met the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and have been released from isolation.

(Active cases) Currently, there are seventeen (17) active cases in the ASNA health care service area, including non-residents.

Atqasuk - 0

Nuiqsut - 0

Utqiagvik - 17

Kaktovik - 0

Point Lay - 0

Wainwright - 0

(Vaccination total) Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital (SSMH) and the North Slope Borough (NSB) have administered a total of three thousand five hundred ninety (3,590) first doses, and three thousand five hundred fifty-one (3,551) second doses of Pfizer or single dose Janssen vaccine to date. It is recommended that individuals who receive the COVID-19 vaccine should continue to practice preventive measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

(Hospitalizations & Deaths) Currently, due to COVID-19, there are no hospitalizations at SSMH. To date, the SSMH has a cumulative total of seventy-six (76) hospitalizations due to the virus. The North Slope Borough has a cumulative total of eight (8) residents who have passed away to date.

(Cumulative total) The North Slope Borough has a cumulative total of two thousand five hundred eighty-four (2,584) resident cases to date. This includes three hundred fifty-six (356) North Slope Borough residents who are self-isolating outside of the ASNA health care service area, as reported by the NSB Health Department.

Children ages 5-17 years may receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Appointments are required. To schedule an appointment please call **SSMH COVID-19 Vaccine Appointment Line at (907) 852-9156 or (907) 367-6292**. Appointments are available Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9am-4:30pm. The vaccine has no out-of-pocket costs.

SSMH Rapid Response Teams are providing vaccinations in the villages. SSMH teams have been to all villages within the ASNA service area to provide the vaccine to all interested residents, with return trips scheduled throughout the month. Additional COVID-19 vaccination options are available through the North Slope Borough (NSB) Health Department. For questions, please email covidvaccine@arcticslope.org.

SSMH and the NSB Health Department are in contact with the individuals, and will continue to provide monitoring if on slope. The NSB contact tracing team will reach out to exposed individuals and provide information on precautions. *The SSMH medical team strongly recommends that residents participate in COVID-19 testing especially if experiencing symptoms. Please call SSMH COVID-19 Hotline at 1-833-852-4622. To prevent the spread of COVID-19: stay 6 feet apart from other people, limit social contact, wear a facemask in public, and wash hands frequently.*

SSMH is committed to providing COVID-19 testing for anyone in the community who believes they may have been exposed. Please be aware that several North Slope communities may have travel restrictions. If you need testing prior to traveling, please contact the SSMH COVID-19 Hotline at 1-833-852-4622 to access the SSMH online testing form follow the link at <https://in-takeq.com/new/p0oWeK/3rTyva>

Testing is available every day from 10am-7pm at the old NSB Transit Station facility at 1710 Ahkovak Street, located near the airport. This location accommodates testing for each in-bound Alaska Airlines flight, as well as drive-thru capability. The tests are available with no out-of-pocket costs, and may be repeated every seven (7) days.

The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

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

If you are experiencing symptoms please contact SSMH COVID-19 Hotline: 1-833-852-4622 with any questions. If you live in Utqiagvik, you may access the Drive-thru testing option. If you are in a village, please contact your local health clinic to arrange testing and notify clinic staff before your arrival. Testing is available regardless of symptoms or travel history.

SSMH activated its incident command structure on March 16, 2020 to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. SSMH is also working with the NSB Emergency Operations Center, NSB Health Department, and is communicating daily with regional community leaders.

Please continue to follow the CDC recommendations for protecting yourself against COVID-19. More information on protecting yourself can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19.html>

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