

Press Release

Contact: Tim Rowe, Public Information Officer

Phone: 907.852.9264

Email: timothy.rowe@arcticslope.org

5 Individuals test positive for COVID-19; FDA and CDC approve second vaccine booster for ages 50 years and older

March 31, 2022 - Utqiagvik, Alaska: (New cases) As of 12pm today, the Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) was notified that five (5) individuals have tested positive for COVID-19. Four (4) are residents of Utqiagvik and one (1) is a resident of a North Slope Borough community. The individuals have been instructed to isolate. **Anyone who is waiting for test results or have tested positive on a home test kit, please self-isolate.**

(Recovered cases) Two (2) individuals have met the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and have been released from isolation.

(Active cases) Currently, there are eight (8) active cases in the ASNA health care service area, including non-residents.

Atqasuk - 0

Nuiqsut - 0

Utqiagvik - 7

Kaktovik - 1

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 nine hundred (3,900) first doses, and three thousand nine hundred twenty-five (3,925) 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 eighty-nine (89) hospitalizations due to the virus. The North Slope Borough has a cumulative total of thirteen (13) who have passed away to date.

(Cumulative total) The North Slope Borough has a cumulative total of three thousand eight hundred fourteen (3,814) resident cases to date. This includes five hundred seventeen (517) North Slope Borough residents who are 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. 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, Friday, 3:30pm - 5:00pm. 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. For questions, please email covidvaccine@arcticslope.org.

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 12pm-8pm 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. Tests acquired at SSMH or the testing center 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
- Headache
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Loss of smell or taste
- Body aches
- Sneezing/Runny Nose
- Stomach ache

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 communicating with regional entities.

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>

###

