



Dear Community Members,

Alaska’s average daily case counts are now trending down significantly statewide. Last month we went from a high alert level to an intermediate alert level for the first time since September, indicating less spread and fewer cases overall, though a couple regions remain at a high alert level due to higher case rates.

We have been very fortunate this past year in keeping COVID-19 out of the villages we serve. We believe the partnership and collaboration with local Tribal Councils, IHS, Alaska Public Health, Chugach Corporation, schools and air carriers along with implementation of local travel restrictions helped us keep the village communities we serve COVID free.

Unfortunately, everything changed last month when we had our first confirmed case in Tatitlek. It is truly alarming to see how vicious this virus is and how fast it spreads. Within just a few days, confirmed cases rose to 40% of total community affected including confirmed cases of people who were fully vaccinated. COVID-19 infections in fully vaccinated people are expected as vaccines are not 100% effective in preventing infections. However, they are very effective at preventing severe illness such as those requiring hospitalization or causing deaths.

Fortunately, in Tatitlek there is a high COVID-19 vaccination rate and most experienced no symptoms to mild/moderate symptoms. Since January 1, 2021, 98% of all COVID-19 hospitalizations in Alaska have been among people who were unvaccinated. If this had happened a year ago today, we would undoubtedly be in a different place with medevacs, hospitalizations, and potential deaths. “Vaccination is one of the most important ways to slow the spread of the virus,” says Chugachmiut’s Medical Director Dr. Wahl. “We encourage everyone, including children, to get vaccinated when they are eligible and the vaccine is available to them.”

TAKE ACTION- Choosing to get vaccinated is the single most important action you can take to protect yourself and your community.

Through quick action, collaboration and community support, the virus was contained and as of today, no positive results have been reported since May 21st.

Current Case Counts in Alaska

New Resident Cases Yesterday	Total Resident Cases	Currently Hospitalized	Total Resident Deaths Statewide
57	67,648	21	362
New Nonresident Cases Yesterday	Total Nonresident Cases	Total Hospitalizations	Total Nonresident Deaths Statewide
3	2,821	1,625	7

What’s New?

COVID-19 Vaccine for Children: Children ages 12 and over are now eligible for the Pfizer vaccine, following approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and authorization by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Heart Reaction Investigated as Possible Rare Vaccine Side Effect in Adolescents and Young Adults:

CDC alerted the public last month that it was monitoring a small number of reports of heart inflammation in teens and young adults after receiving the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Since April 2021, increased cases of myocarditis and pericarditis have been reported in the United States after receiving Pfizer or Moderna vaccination particularly in adolescents and young adults. There has not been a similar reporting pattern observed after receipt of the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine (Johnson & Johnson).

In most cases, patients who presented for medical care have responded well to medications and rest and had prompt improvement of symptoms. Reported cases have occurred predominantly in male adolescents and young adults 16 years of age and older. Onset was typically within several days after vaccination, and cases have occurred more often after the second dose than the first dose. CDC and its partners are investigating these reports of myocarditis and pericarditis following vaccination.

CDC continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 years of age and older given the risk of COVID-19 illness and related, possibly severe complications, such as long-term health problems, hospitalization, and even death.

What Symptoms Should You Be on the Lookout for after COVID-19 Vaccination?

Be on the lookout for any of the following symptoms:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart

Seek medical care if you think you or your child has any of these symptoms within a week after vaccination.

COVID-19 Vaccine Available at Alaska Airports: Starting June 1st, anyone arriving at the Juneau, Fairbanks, Ketchikan, or Anchorage airports is able to get a dose of vaccine free of charge at the airport.

Alaska Department of Health & Social Services Website: DHSS has identified the dhss.alaska.gov website as the target of a malware attack. Most content is currently unavailable. Critical COVID-19 information- including vaccine appointment scheduling and the data dashboards is still available online.

Alaska DHSS COVID-19 Data Change: Starting June 7th, DHSS will update most data on the Alaska COVID-19 Information Hub Mon/Wed/Fri. Two exceptions will be the hospital and vaccine dashboards, which will continue 5x weekly, excluding holidays. Questions? Email covidquestions@alaska.gov

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) - Hospitalizations Aged 12-17 Years with Confirmed COVID-19: After initially decreasing in early 2021, adolescent hospitalization rates for COVID-19 increased during March to April. Recent increased hospitalization rates and potential for severe disease reinforce the importance of continued COVID-19 prevention measures, including vaccination and correct and consistent mask wearing among persons not fully vaccinated or when required.

Local Clinic Service Updates

- **Clinic Services:** Currently not accepting walk-ins. Call clinics for an appointment. **Please DO NOT DELAY YOUR MEDICAL CARE.** Many people have delayed care, now is the time to make sure you and your family are caught up on general health recommendations to stay well. Make an appointment for any missed childhood vaccines, health screenings, and physicals.



- **Dental Services:** Dr. Murphy remains on-call for any dental emergencies. We also are onboarding an itinerant dentist to serve village dental needs and will provide a village visit schedule soon.

Village SCF Dental Services:

Cheneqa- June 7th to June 11th
 Port Graham- June 14th to June 18th

- **Optometry Services:** SCF has also developed a schedule to resume optometry services for Region as follows:
 Seward- June 21st to June 25th
 Port Graham- December 6th to December 10th
 Nanwalek- TBD
- **COVID-19 Testing:** We have an adequate amount of testing supplies. **CDC recommends that anyone with any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 get tested, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection.**

Who does not need to be tested?

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered, as long as they do not develop new symptoms, do not need to get tested. CDC does not recommend people who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered, to test again as long as they do not develop new symptoms. Why? Current data shows that a person who has had and recovered from COVID-19 may have low levels of virus in their bodies for up to 3 months after diagnosis. This means that if the person who has recovered from COVID-19 is retested within 3 months of initial infection, they may continue to have a positive result, even though they are not spreading COVID-19.

What if you recently recovered from COVID-19 and need a proof of a negative test for travel?

If you have had a positive viral test in the past 3 months, and you have met the criteria to end isolation, you may travel instead with documentation of your positive viral test results and a letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official that states you have been cleared for travel. The positive test result and letter together are referred to as “documentation of recovery.”

A letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official that clears you to end isolation, e.g., to return to work or school, can be used to show you are cleared to travel, even if travel isn’t specifically mentioned in the letter.

Testing for May:

	COVID-19 Testing May	COVID-19 Testing YTD	COVID-19 Results Negative YTD	COVID-19 Results Positive May	COVID-19 Results Positive YTD	ANMC Pending Results
Cheneqa	13	178	178	0	0	0
Nanwalek	26	603	603	0	0	0
Port Graham	37	547	547	0	0	0
Seward	52	775	737	0	36	2
Tatitlek	115	259	228	31	31	0
Total	243	2362	2293	31	67	2



- **Universal Masking:** It is our collective responsibility to exemplify and uphold a culture of health and safety. Chugachmiut has a universal masking requirement for all staff, contractors, patients and visitors in all Chugachmiut operated medical and dental clinics and pharmacy to best protect our staff, patients and communities amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **MyHealth Enrollment:** Do you want immediate access to your medical record 24/7 to get test results, clinical documents, medication list, and the ability to connect with your provider and care team, or view and request appointments? Contact clinic to enroll and gain access to YOUR MyHealth account.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine:** Vaccines are available at all clinics. **Encouraging ALL to call your local clinic to schedule an appointment to get your COVID-19 vaccine!**
- **Burning The Midnight Sun Fitness Challenge:** Get your body moving with our endless summer sunshine! Compete in fun challenges against others, set new goals for yourself and watch your progress over time.
 - **Dates of challenge: JUNE 7th to JULY 5th**
 - Random drawings for prizes will be held for active participants. Bonus points if you capture and share pictures of your outdoor adventures.

HOW TO SIGN UP

1. Download the *MoveSpring* app or go to movespring.com to create an account.
2. Enter Organization Code: E5DGV5 (confirm Chugachmiut as the organization)
3. Join Group Called: Burning the Midnight Sun (group code MZ266N)

If you need assistance contact either: Josephn@chugachmiut.org or gala@Chugachmiut.org

- **COVID-19 Education & Awareness Virtual Community Health Meeting:** Get the latest COVID-19 updates and answers to your questions from Chugachmiut's Health Service Team. Topics of Discussion:
 - Learn the facts about COVID-19 Vaccines and Effects on Your Community
 - Learn what we know about COVID-19
 - Get Answers to Your Questions

Date: Wednesday, June 9, 2021 Time: 3:30pm to 4:30pm Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting
Meeting ID: 972 9680 4164 Passcode: 929050 or Dial Toll-free: 8-77-853-5257

Alaska's COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard Summary as of 06/04/2021





Vaccine Data



VACCINATIONS – 53% of Alaskans age 12 and older have received at least their first vaccine dose.

47% of Alaskans 12 and older have been fully vaccinated. The higher the vaccination rate, the more protected community members are from COVID-19. See below for percentages of all fully vaccinated Alaskans age 12 and older by region:

- Juneau Region: 67%
- Other Southeast Region - Northern: 62%
- YK-Delta Region: 61%
- Southwest Region: 55%
- Other Southeast Region - Southern: 53%
- Northwest Region: 50%
- Anchorage Region: 49%
- Other Interior Region: 49%
- Kenai Peninsula Region: 40%
- Fairbanks North Star Borough: 40%
- Matanuska-Susitna Region: 31%

COVID-19 Variants & What We Know

Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur. Some variations allow the virus to spread more easily or make it resistant to treatments or vaccines. Those variants must be monitored more carefully.

Alaska has detected cases of “variants of concern”. These variants seem to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, which may lead to more cases of COVID-19. So far, studies suggest that the current authorized vaccines work on the circulating variants. It is important for scientists to continue monitoring new variants and their characteristics. Emerging variants may be able to:

- spread more quickly
- cause more severe disease
- avoid detection in routine testing
- resist treatment to a greater extent
- evade natural or vaccine-induced immunity

COVID-19 Vaccines Help Stop New Variants. As we vaccinate as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, we can stop the spread of the coronavirus. A slow transmission of the virus means fewer opportunities for it to mutate, which can help prevent the emergence of any other variants.



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Chugachmiut's COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard

Region Vaccination Series Complete = 551

Chenege Vaccination Rates		Nanwalek Vaccination Rates		Port Graham Vaccination Rates	
Total Population Vaccinated:	29	Total Population Vaccinated:	133	Total Population Vaccinated:	94
Total Population:	46	Total Population:	258	Total Population:	150
Percent Vaccinated	63.04%	Percent Vaccinated	51.55%	Percent Vaccinated	62.67%
Population >12 Vaccinated	29	Population >12 Vaccinated	133	Population >12 Vaccinated	94
Total Population >12	41	Total Population >12	192	Total Population >12	116
Percent >12 Vaccinated	70.73%	Percent >12 Vaccinated	69.27%	Percent >12 Vaccinated	81.03%
Population >65 Vaccinated	5	Population >65 Vaccinated	13	Population >65 Vaccinated	19
Total Population >65	5	Total Population >65	14	Total Population >65	19
Percent >65 Vaccinated	100.00%	Percent >65 Vaccinated	92.86%	Percent >65 Vaccinated	100.00%
Vaccine Series Complete = 29		Vaccine Series Complete = 133		Vaccine Series Complete = 94	
Tatitlek Vaccination Rates		Seward Vaccination Rates		Region Vaccination Rates	
Total Population Vaccinated:	45	Total Population Vaccinated:	250	Total Population Vaccinated:	551
Total Population:	67	Total Population:	583	Total Population:	1104
Percent Vaccinated	67.16%	Percent Vaccinated	42.88%	Percent Vaccinated	49.91%
Population >12 Vaccinated	45	Population >12 Vaccinated	250	Population >12 Vaccinated	551
Total Population >12	56	Total Population >12	503	Total Population >12	908
Percent >12 Vaccinated	80.36%	Percent >12 Vaccinated	49.70%	Percent >12 Vaccinated	60.68%
Population >65 Vaccinated	10	Population >65 Vaccinated	55	Population >65 Vaccinated	102
Total Population >65	10	Total Population >65	68	Total Population >65	116
Percent >65 Vaccinated	100.00%	Percent >65 Vaccinated	80.88%	Percent >65 Vaccinated	87.93%
Vaccine Series Complete = 45		Vaccine Series Complete = 250		Vaccine Series Complete = 551	

Common COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

What are the benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

A COVID-19 vaccine might:

- Prevent you from getting COVID-19 or from becoming seriously ill or dying due to COVID-19
- Prevent you from spreading the COVID-19 virus to others
- Add to the number of people in the community who are protected from getting COVID-19 — making it harder for the disease to spread and contributing to herd immunity
- Prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading and replicating, which allows it to mutate and possibly become more resistant to vaccines

Do the COVID-19 vaccines protect against the COVID-19 variants?

The COVID-19 vaccines were developed based on the S protein before it contained the mutations identified in the variants. While research suggests that COVID-19 vaccines have lower efficacy against the variants, the vaccines still appear to provide protection against severe COVID-19. Further research is needed. In addition, vaccine manufacturers are also creating booster shots to improve protection against variants.





What are the long-term side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines?

Because COVID-19 vaccines clinical trials only started in the summer of 2020, it's not yet clear if these vaccines will have long-term side effects. However, vaccines rarely cause long-term side effects.

If you're concerned, in the U.S., safety data on COVID-19 vaccines will be reported to a national program called the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. This data is available to the public. The CDC has also created v-safe, a smartphone-based tool that allows users to report COVID-19 vaccine side effects.

Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine even if I've already had COVID-19?

Getting COVID-19 might offer some natural protection or immunity from reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19. But it's not clear how long this protection lasts. Because reinfection is possible and COVID-19 can cause severe medical complications, it's recommended that people who have already had COVID-19 get a COVID-19 vaccine. If you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Can I still get COVID-19 after I'm vaccinated?

COVID-19 vaccination will protect most people from getting sick with COVID-19.

A very small percentage of fully vaccinated people will still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the COVID-19 virus. These are called vaccine breakthrough cases. Some people might not experience any symptoms and some people could become sick due to COVID-19.

However, vaccination might make illness less severe. If you are fully vaccinated, the overall risk of hospitalization and death due to COVID-19 is much lower than among unvaccinated people with similar risk factors.

Community & Family Services Division Updates

- **Summer “Laugh and Learn” Series:** Everyone is invited and welcome to attend! Offered virtually via Zoom link! Text 907-764-1945 for link invite!
- **Chugachmiut Regional Alcoholic Anonymous Meetings:** Held every Tuesday and Thursday at 12:00pm. Join meeting via Zoom. Meeting ID: 748 764 6244
- **Virtual Recovery Camp “Llangarwik”:** Llangarwik is a unique alternative to residential alcohol/drug treatment for Alaska Natives. Our approach is holistic, natural and traditional.
Dates: July 26th to August 9th Monday–Friday 1:00pm to 6:00pm and Saturday-Sunday 2:00pm to 4:00pm. For more information call 907-602-8644 or email eydief@chugachmiut.org



Additional Informational Resources

- The Alaska Department of Health & Social Services COVID-19 home page online at : <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>



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- The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 home page online at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/>
- Alaska's COVID-19 ECHO Informational Sessions: These videoconferences create virtual learning communities by connecting Alaska's COVID-19 experts with specific audiences on a range of COVID-19 topics. More information can be found at UAA's Alaska ECHO Projects webpage and also through the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Or visit the following link: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/echo.aspx>

Sincerely,

K. Baker

Kelley Baker, Health Services Division Director

