



ALASKA NATIVE  
TRIBAL HEALTH  
CONSORTIUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2020

Media contact:

Shirley Young, ANTHC

(907) 729-5653, (907) 268-1014

[slyoung@anthc.org](mailto:slyoung@anthc.org)

## ANMC Welcoming Patients for Care in Hospital and Clinic Spaces Updated to Protect Patients and Staff;

*Immunizations, Treatments for Chronic Illness and Cancer Screenings Should Resume*

The Alaska Native Medical Center has made many physical changes during this unprecedented time of community response to COVID-19. With increased infection prevention efforts and other safety measures, no further delay in seeking care is necessary or advisable.

Delaying necessary or urgent health care has the potential to create health emergencies that can overwhelm hospitals. Keeping up on immunizations for communicable vaccine-preventable diseases, appointments for managing chronic conditions and preventive cancer screenings, are all ongoing health strategies to protect Alaskans' health now and in the future.

On our campus, ANMC remains at the forefront of the planning and response effort. In conjunction with the State of Alaska and Municipality of Anchorage's required mandates and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and others, we continue to research best practices and update our policies and procedures accordingly.

With these precautions in place, we are strongly encouraging patients to contact their primary or specialty health care providers and schedule appointments that they may have been putting off during the last few months. We have taken steps to ensure our patients and staff remain safe and enjoy continued excellent health care services, while also updating our physical spaces. Notably, anyone entering the hospital is screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and must wear a mask, the rotunda and cafeteria remain closed, seating has been removed and spaced out in waiting rooms, the pharmacy has been equipped with clear protective plastic, and we're offering testing for all employees, their households and all of our patients.

According to the [CDC's website](#) the rate of immunizations and well-child visits have declined by about 50% since March. Additionally, annual screenings for conditions such as breast and prostate cancer are on a sharp decline. "Americans have been [urged to delay routine mammograms](#) and colonoscopies to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. As a result, screenings for [breast, cervix and colon cancer](#) are down between 86% and 94%, according to new data from electronic medical records vendor Epic, reports STAT," according to [CancerHealth.com](#).

To learn more about ANTHC's COVID-19 response, or the other programs and health services offered to our communities, please visit [anthc.org](http://anthc.org)