



ALASKA NATIVE
TRIBAL HEALTH
CONSORTIUM

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Alaska Needs Enforceable Health Safety Measures Now:

Widespread community transmission of COVID-19 is forcing a growing percentage of the health care workforce into quarantine

The Alaska Native Medical Center is experiencing a significant increase in patients hospitalized with COVID-19. Concurrently, the rising numbers of people impacted by community spread of COVID-19 is impacting the staffing levels of essential health care workers, who must quarantine or isolate after infection or exposure. If this trend continues, our hospital will not have the physical bed space or staff available to provide the level of care our community will likely need.

“The best and most efficient way to increase hospital bed space and health care support staffing capacity is to decrease COVID-19 spread in the community,” said ANMC Administrator, Dr. Robert Onders. “We support the Governor’s statements encouraging all Alaskans to stay home if possible, limit gathering sizes, and wear face coverings when in public.”

In Anchorage, acting Mayor Quinn-Davidson has updated two emergency orders which limit gathering sizes and clarify how and when to wear masks, which should help. However, we know there is approximately a four-week lag time from the time those public health safety measures are put into place until the community sees the positive effects, so personal choices during this time are of critical importance.

According to a [publication from the Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), the combination of state-mandated community mitigation efforts and routine public health interventions can reduce the occurrence of new COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths.

“We do not want to go back to a full hunker down and stay at home order because we have seen that course of action also has many negative consequences,” continued Dr. Onders. “We can all work together to control the spread now by using masks, keeping our bubbles small, and strictly limiting contact with others, especially when wearing masks is not possible.”

To learn more about other preventative programs and health services offered by ANTHC, please visit anthc.org/what-we-do/wellness