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*Commissioner*

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**Department of Health  
and Social Services**

Anchorage, Alaska

**STATE OF ALASKA**

**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Four cases of COVID-19 identified at the Anchorage Pioneer Home**

August 6, 2020 ANCHORAGE— The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has confirmed four positive COVID-19 cases at the Anchorage Pioneer Home, including three residents and one staff member. Upon being notified about the first case of a resident, Alaska Pioneer Home leadership immediately began working with the DHSS Division of Public Health, Section of Epidemiology to respond to the case, identify any other cases and take additional steps to prevent further spread of the disease.

After the initial resident case was identified yesterday afternoon, the three additional cases were identified during testing of residents and staff. The three residents live in the same neighborhood within the home, which is separated from other neighborhoods, and are all in isolation. All four cases are currently still under investigation.

These are the first positive COVID-19 cases in elders at any of the Alaska Pioneer Homes and this is only the second occurrence of COVID-19 associated with the Alaska Pioneer Homes. In June, an employee at the Fairbanks Pioneer Home tested positive for the virus.

To protect all residents and employees at the Anchorage Pioneer Home, the following steps are being taken:

- The elders who tested positive have been placed into isolation and will have, as much as possible, dedicated staffing.
- The employee who tested positive is self-isolating at home.
- The Anchorage Pioneer Home will undergo a thorough sanitizing of resident rooms in the affected neighborhood and all common areas including doorknobs, handrails, dining areas, workspaces, rest rooms and break areas.
- All testing has been completed for residents living in the affected neighborhood and testing of residents in other parts of the home is underway. Routine testing of the entire Pioneer Home staff will be completed today.
- The Anchorage Pioneer Home has adjusted housekeeping, food service, activities and maintenance to ensure the least amount of traffic in and out of the neighborhood as possible.

All Alaska Pioneer Homes have been continually educating staff about infection control procedures; conducting health screenings of any personnel entering the building; immediately sending home any employee who has symptoms and requiring testing before return; screening residents daily for symptoms; and testing any residents who have any symptoms. The Anchorage Pioneer Home has been closed to visitors since March 17, 2020.

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