

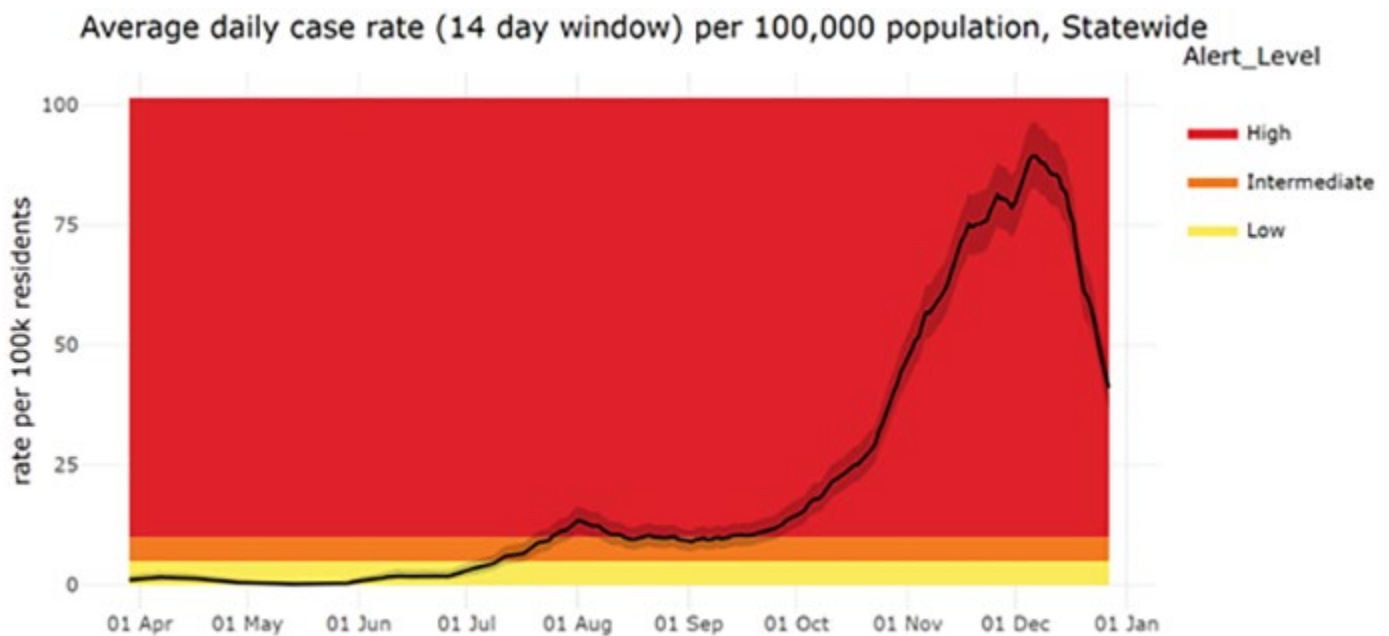


## Alaska Department of Health & Social Services Weekly Case Update December 20–26, 2020

### Brief status report

- The daily growth rate of viral transmission in Alaska reversed from 0.26% to -3.5% over the past two weeks, indicating that viral transmission appears to be slowing.
- Every Alaskan who chooses to wear a mask, stay 6 feet from others, and avoid indoor gatherings contributes to the response effort.
- The statewide effort to provide every Alaskan with the option of receiving a vaccine as soon as supply allows continues. A second vaccine for COVID-19 received FDA emergency use authorization and distribution has begun.
- A [new variant](#) of the virus causing COVID-19 has been reported in the UK. CDC is monitoring the new variant, which appears to spread faster but does not appear to cause more severe disease. As of 12/29/2020, one case has been confirmed in the United States, in Colorado.
- CDC [guidelines recommend](#) regular testing for critical infrastructure workers and other groups at higher risk for COVID-19, even if they are asymptomatic. While testing should continue to be prioritized for people with symptoms and those with known exposures to COVID-19, expanding screening testing to many groups, including restaurant and grocery store workers, school staff, people who recently attended large gatherings, first responders and healthcare workers is recommended. While these recommendations are not requirements for testing, DHSS is available to consult on the logistics of expanding testing.
- Alaskans should get tested immediately at the first sign of any symptoms. Tests work best when obtained promptly after symptoms start. Testing early can help Alaskans know they are positive quickly and to take precautions to minimize the risk of transmitting the virus to others.
- Most Alaskans get COVID-19 from a friend, family member, or coworker. Many Alaskans who are diagnosed with COVID-19 report that they went to social gatherings, community events, church services and other social venues while they were contagious but before they knew they had the virus. Alaskans should avoid indoor gatherings with non-household members, avoid crowds, wear masks when around non-household members, and stay 6 feet from anyone not in their household.

- As cases, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to increase across the United States, the safest way to celebrate the winter holidays is to celebrate at home with your household members. Gatherings with family and friends who do not live with you can increase the chances of getting or spreading COVID-19 or the flu.
- [Specific requirements](#) for testing and strict social distancing apply to anyone returning to Alaska or traveling between the road/ferry system and smaller communities within Alaska.

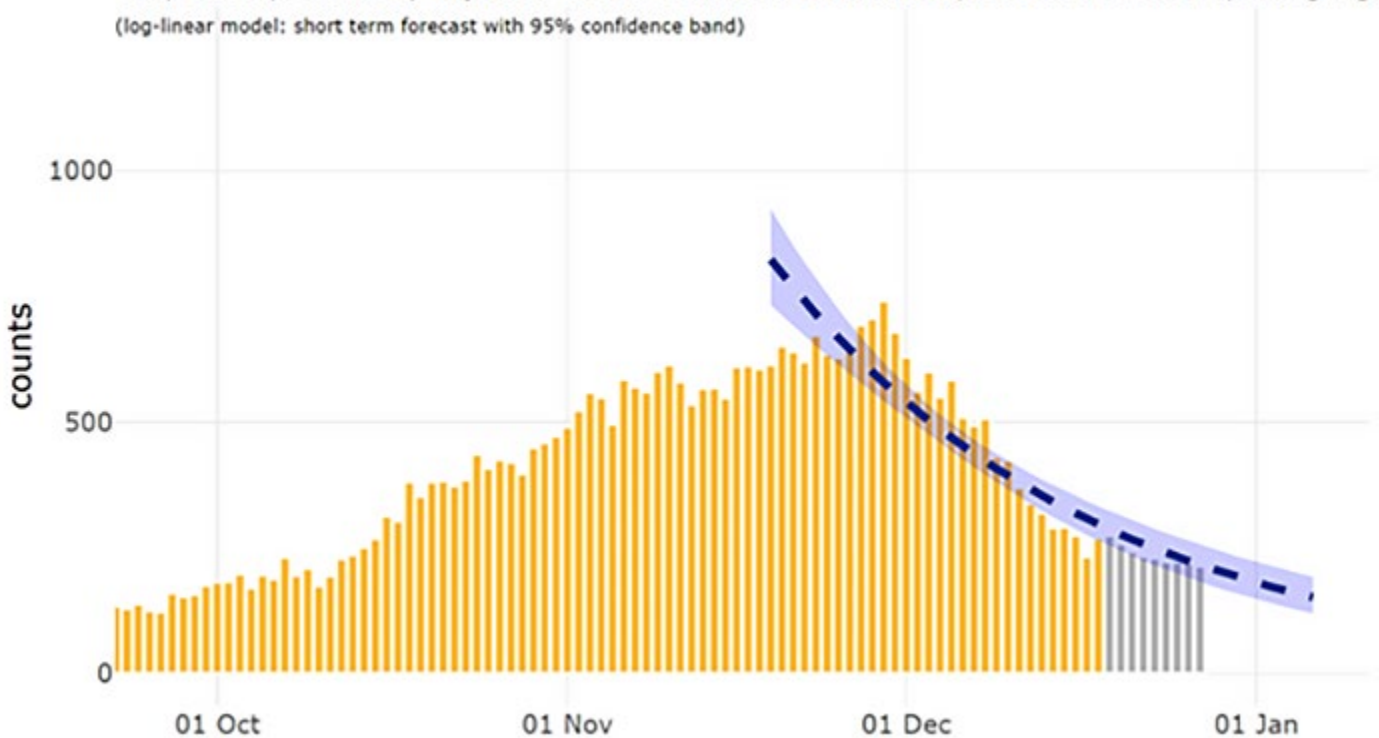


## Case trends and predictions

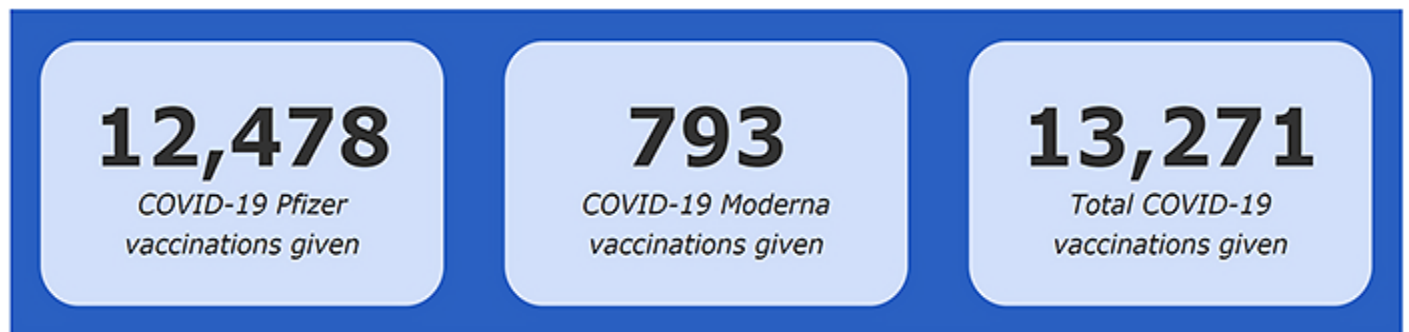
- 1,865 new cases were reported in Alaskans last week. This is 29% fewer than the week before but still reflects continued high-level community transmission throughout much of Alaska.
- Case rates decreased across all regions of Alaska. However, all regions of Alaska other than the Southern Southeast Region continue to have high community transmission and are at a high alert level.
- The estimated daily growth rate as of December 28, 2020 is -3.5% and new cases are expected to halve every 20 days based on current modeling.

## Estimated Epidemic Curve, Statewide

Gray bars: preliminary adjusted counts estimated from incomplete data due to reporting lag  
(log-linear model: short term forecast with 95% confidence band)



## Vaccines status update



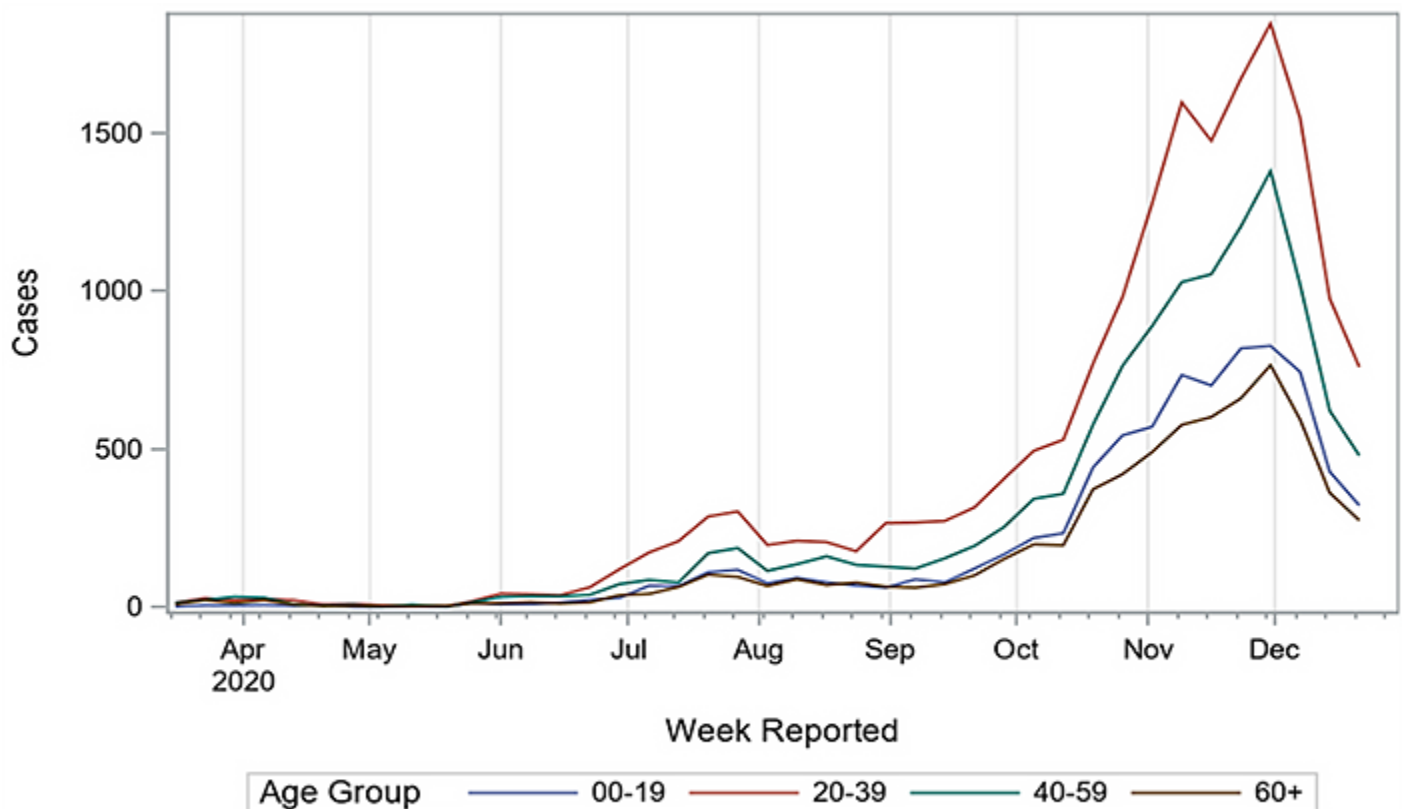
- The State of Alaska is working with federal, local, Tribal, and military partners to ensure that the distribution of vaccine goes as quickly and smoothly as possible.
- A limited amount of vaccine is currently available with more expected to be delivered in the coming weeks and months. As of December 28, more than 12,000 COVID-19 vaccines had been administered in Alaska. A tracker is [available online](#) as is a [vaccine dashboard](#) for up-to-date data.
- There are no plans to mandate a vaccine at the state level.

- The national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is responsible for providing national recommendations for vaccine administration and allocation.

## New cases, hospitalizations and deaths

- During the week of December 20–26, 1,865 new cases in Alaskans were reported, a 29% decrease from last week, for a total of 44,406 cumulative cases in Alaskans.
- Cumulative hospitalizations increased to 974 with 22 reported as occurring this week. Hospitalization reports often lag and only 917 hospitalizations were reported at this time last week, so there are 57 hospitalizations newly reported this week including ones that began during previous weeks.
- Deaths among Alaska residents increased by 16 (199 total). All deaths occurred prior to this past week. It is common to take more than a week for a death to be reported, and more deaths that occurred during Dec 20–26 may be reported in future.
- There were 45 new nonresident cases identified this week, for a total of 1,503 cases.

## Cases by Week Reported and Age Group

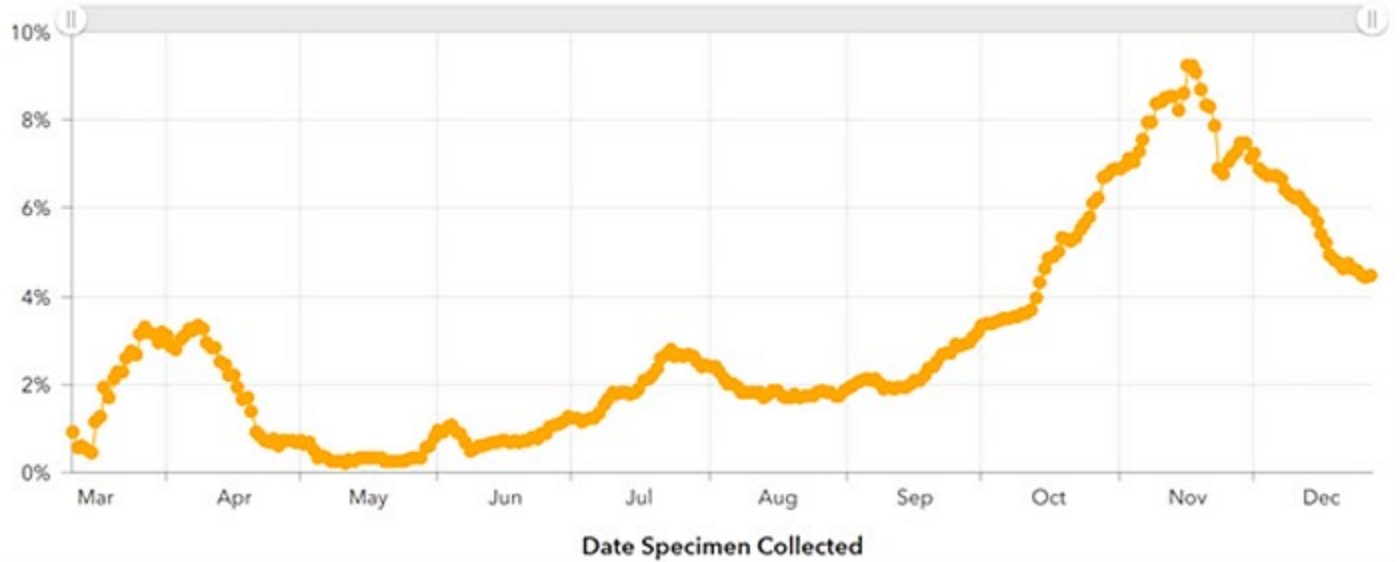


1. Unknown ages not shown.
2. Current (incomplete) week not shown.

## Regional case trends

Behavioral Health Region	Case rates Nov 8– Nov 21	Case rates Nov 15– Nov 28	Case rates Nov 22– Dec 5	Case rates Nov 29– Dec 12*	Case rates Dec 5– Dec 19	Case rates Dec 13– Dec 26
Anchorage Municipality	108.3	105.3	89.2	87.7	73.3	46.4
Fairbanks North Star Borough	49.4	42.9	41.0	65.5	61.8	33.8
Interior Region except Fairbanks	62.2	61.5	48.7	46.9	35.0	23.2
Juneau City and Borough	31.0	22.6	23.5	23.7	17.0	14.7
Kenai Peninsula Borough	94.2	100.6	105.7	75.5	60.7	40.0
Matanuska-Susitna Region	41.7	68.3	154.4	113.9	62.0	48.2
Northern Southeast Region	24.1	23.8	27.2	19.2	15.0	12.6
Northwest Region	43.7	50.5	65.6	68.2	58.9	36.5
Southern Southeast Region	15.8	7.5	14.7	14.0	9.0	5.0
Southwest Region	32.1	40.5	72.9	117.2	89.0	50.9
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region	146.1	188.4	172.9	164.8	158.0	73.3
Statewide	77	79.9	89.7	85.8	65.2	41.1

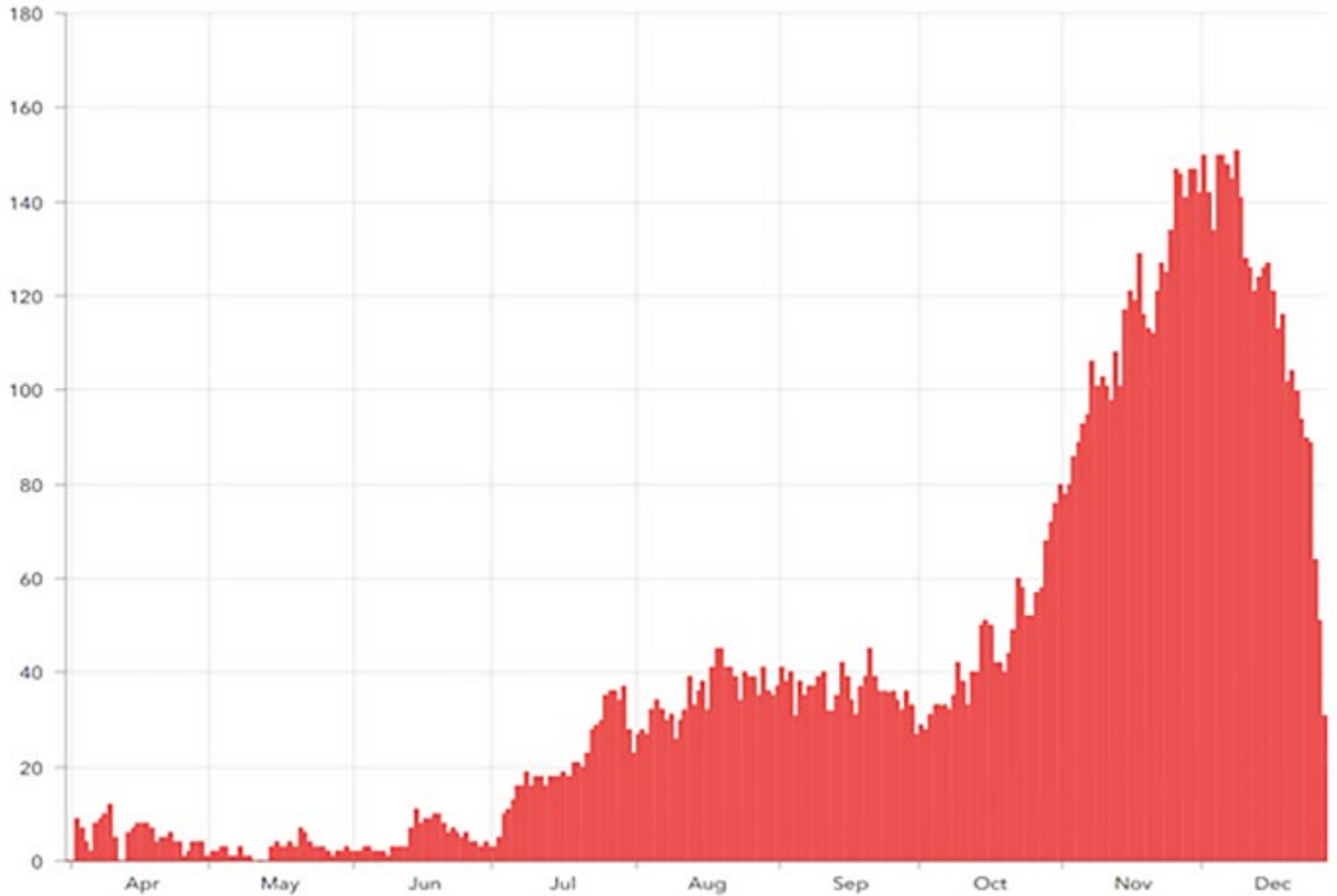
\*Note: case rates for Nov 29–Dec 12 reflect two-week case rates through Dec 14



## Health care capacity

- On December 28, 70 Alaskans with confirmed COVID-19 were hospitalized, a 36% decrease from this time last week; 10 were reported to have required a mechanical ventilator.
- Hospital staffing can change quickly, particularly if a community has many health workers impacted by COVID-19.

## Total Confirmed COVID Beds Occupied



## Further information

- The [Frequently Asked Questions](#) webpage is often the quickest route to an answer regarding testing, travel, health mandates and other COVID-19 information.
- Please see the [State of Alaska COVID-19 information](#) page for more information about the virus and how individuals and businesses can protect themselves and others from transmission.
- For the most up-to-date case information, see the [Alaska Coronavirus Response Hub dashboard](#). Some data may change as more information comes to light through contact tracing and other public health work.
- For questions regarding DHSS COVID response, including mandates and alerts, email [covidquestions@alaska.gov](mailto:covidquestions@alaska.gov).

For DHSS media inquiries, please contact [clinton.bennett@alaska.gov](mailto:clinton.bennett@alaska.gov).