



COVID-19

Alaska Weekly Case Update

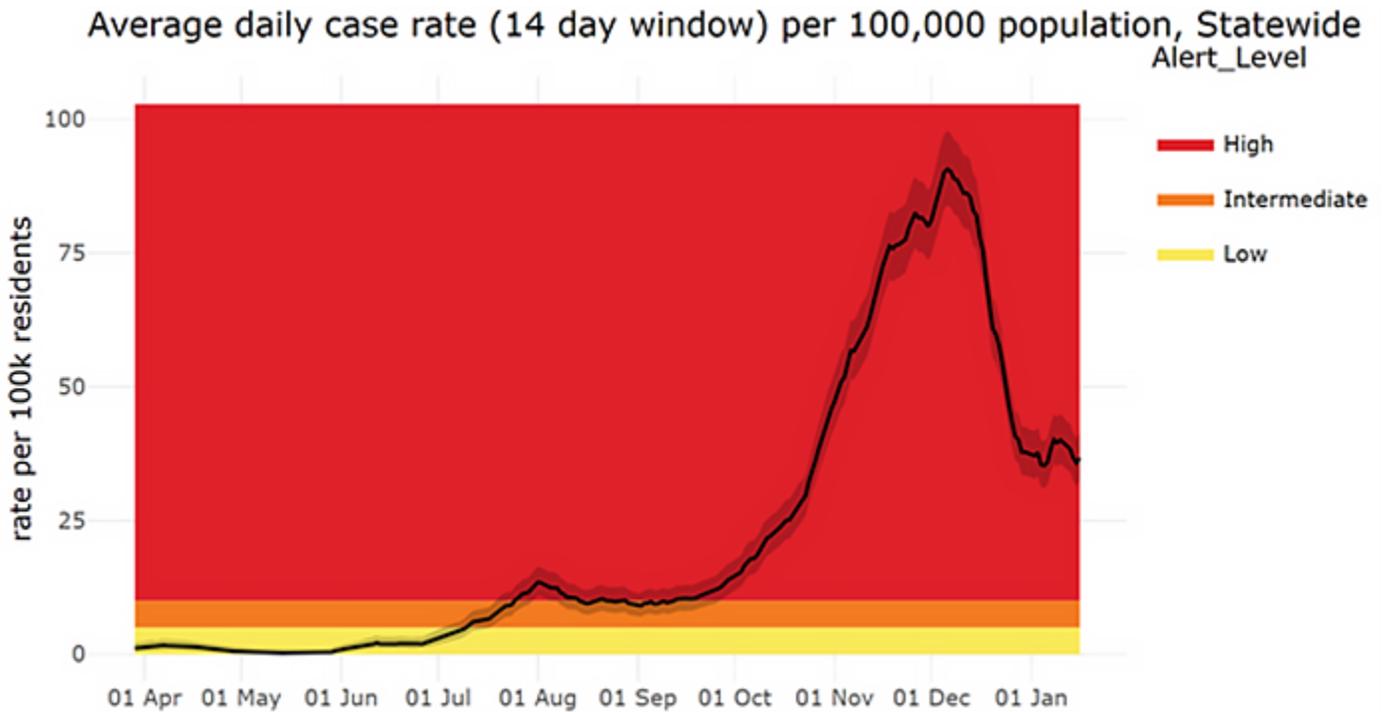
Alaska Department of Health & Social Services Weekly Case Update January 10 – January 16, 2021

Status report

- Based on the daily growth rate of cases, viral transmission in Alaska followed a general downward trajectory during December. However, during the first two weeks of January the trajectory flattened out, raising concern for an uptick in transmission.
- Every Alaskan who chooses to wear a mask, stay 6 feet from others, and avoid indoor gatherings helps protect themselves and the health of all Alaskans.
- The statewide effort to provide every Alaskan with the option of receiving a vaccine as soon as supply allows is ongoing and [accelerating as quickly as possible](#), although vaccine supply remains scarce. Two vaccines for COVID-19 have received FDA emergency use authorization and are currently being administered in Alaska. The state allocation for December and January has been distributed and we are waiting to hear about the number of vaccines Alaska is allocated for February.
- Currently eligible groups for vaccination include those in Phase 1a: healthcare workers and residents in nursing homes, and those in Phase 1b Tier 1, Alaskans aged 65 or older. [Other groups in Phase 1b](#) may not register at this time but may register as soon as vaccination opens for their phase and tier. All registration for vaccines should go through the registration system on covidvax.alaska.gov, which also has an [eligibility tool](#) for any Alaskan unsure of when they can receive the vaccine. All updates on phases and tiers will be posted on that website and new appointments are added on a continuous basis; Alaskans are encouraged to check it frequently.
- Several [new variants](#) of the virus causing COVID-19 have been reported, including one in the United Kingdom (UK), one in South Africa and one [from Brazil](#). The UK variant appears to spread faster but does not appear to cause more severe disease. As of 1/15/2021, cases of the UK variant have been confirmed in multiple regions of the United States and Canada. None have yet been found in Alaska. CDC is monitoring the new variants and [encouraging](#) states to do more sequencing. The Alaska State Public Health Laboratories routinely sequence a subset of positive SARS-CoV-2 tests including all that contain the pattern associated with the UK strain.
- Since at least one of these new strains is thought to be more transmissible, masks, distancing, avoiding gatherings, following all travel requirements, and other mitigation

measures are our best tools to decrease the chance of the new variant entering Alaska and spreading.

- **Alaska Health Order 6 requires, at minimum, a test within 72 hours before arrival and strict social distancing for five days on arrival to Alaska. To stop new strains of virus like the UK strain from coming into Alaska and spreading, testing 1-3 days before travel, staying home for 7 days after travel and testing again 3-5 days after travel as laid out in the new CDC guidelines for international and domestic travel is highly encouraged. Starting Jan 26, 2021, the CDC will require international travelers to show proof of a negative test from within the last 72 hours on arrival back in the US.**
- CDC [guidelines recommend](#) regular testing for critical infrastructure workers and other groups at higher risk for COVID-19, even if they are asymptomatic. 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 helps people know if they are positive quickly and helps prompt them to take immediate 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 connect with others is electronically. Gatherings with family and friends who do not live with you can increase the chances of getting or spreading COVID-19.



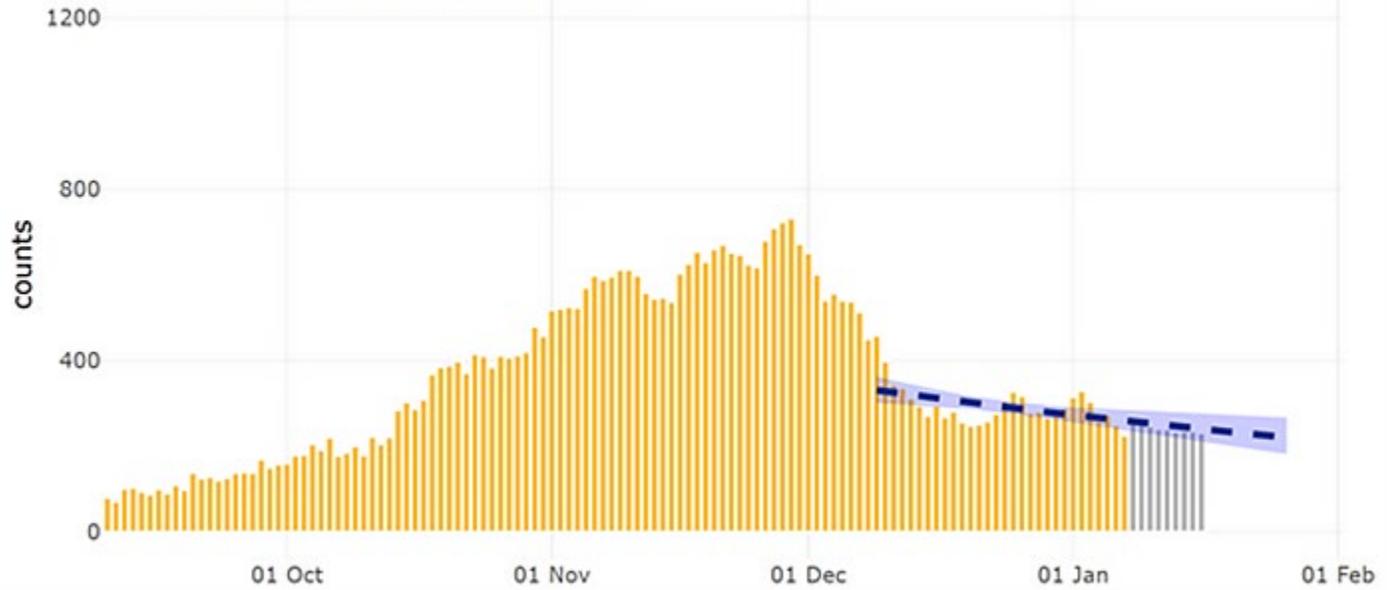
Case trends and predictions

- 1,702 new cases were reported in Alaskans last week. This is a 19% decrease from the week before and still reflects continued high-level community transmission throughout much of Alaska.
- 14-day average daily case rates remained similar to the previous week in many regions of Alaska. The largest increase was seen in the Northwest Region, from 46.6 to 69.0, and the Northern Southeast Region nearly doubled its case rate from 7.7 to 14.7. Smaller increases were seen in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Juneau City and Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough, and Southwest Region. All regions of Alaska other than the Southern Southeast Region and Juneau City and Borough continue to have high community transmission and are at a high alert level.
- The estimated statewide daily growth rate as of January 18, 2021 is -0.8% and new cases are expected to halve every 82 days based on current modeling, an increase from two weeks ago in which the growth rate was -4.2% and cases were expected to halve every 16 days.

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)



Regional case trends

Behavioral Health Region	Case rates Nov 29– Dec 12*	Case rates Dec 5– Dec 19	Case rates Dec 13– Dec 26	Case rates Dec 20– Jan 2	Case rates Jan 3– Jan 9	Case rates Jan 10– Jan 16
Anchorage Municipality	87.7	73.3	46.4	40.0	39.5	31.9
Fairbanks North Star Borough	65.5	61.8	33.8	32.6	39.3	42.1
Interior Region except Fairbanks	46.9	35.0	23.2	23.8	27.1	26.8
Juneau City and Borough	23.7	17.0	14.7	13.6	7.4	7.8
Kenai Peninsula Borough	75.5	60.7	40.0	22.3	19.2	19.6
Matanuska-Susitna Region	113.9	62.0	48.2	48.2	48.2	40.7
Northern Southeast Region	19.2	15.0	12.6	7.0	7.7	14.7

Northwest Region	68.2	58.9	36.5	25.3	46.6	69.0
Southern Southeast Region	14.0	9.0	5.0	6.1	10.0	9.0
Southwest Region	117.2	89.0	50.9	42.5	35.8	41.0
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region	164.8	158.0	73.3	144.2	152.8	136.3
Statewide	85.8	65.2	41.1	38.6	39.8	36.7

**Note: case rates for Nov 29–Dec 12 reflect 2-week case rates through Dec 14*

Vaccines status update

Total Allocated Vaccines 114,800	Dose #1 Vaccinations 56,869	Vaccination Series Complete 12,178
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As of January 18, 2020.

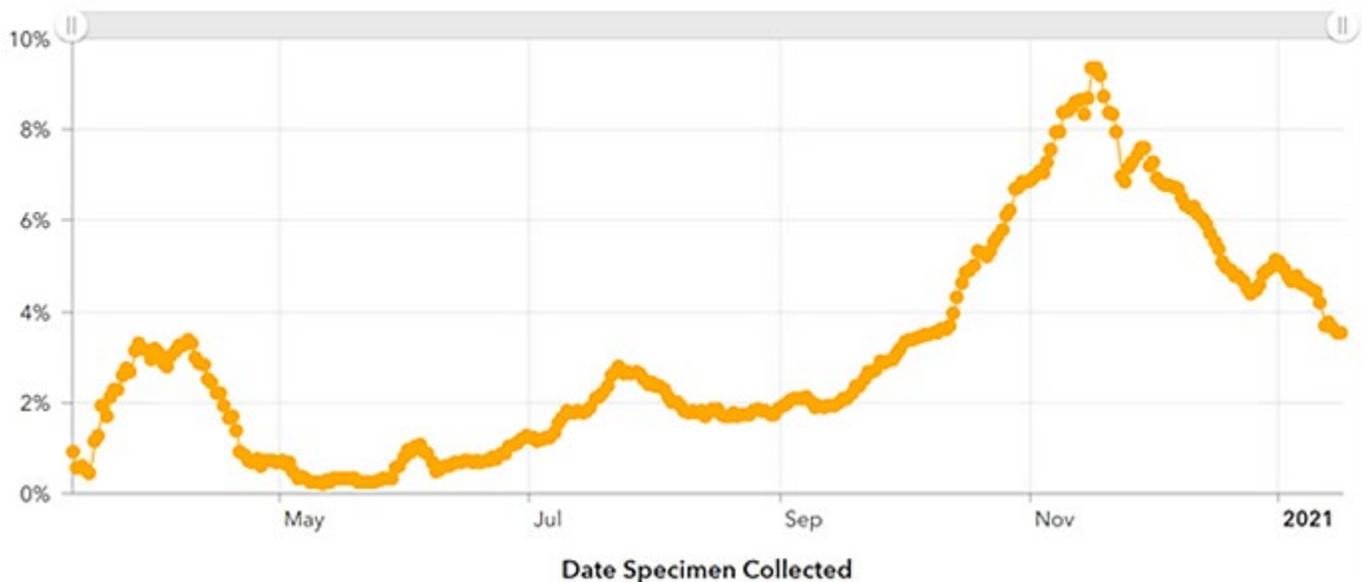
- The State of Alaska is working with federal, local, Tribal, and military partners to ensure that the distribution of vaccine goes as quickly and smoothly as possible.
- A limited amount of vaccine is currently available with more expected to be delivered in the coming months. As of January 15, nearly 44,000 Alaskans had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine and more than 11,000 had received both doses. On January 18, the [New York Times vaccination tracker](#) had Alaska second only to West Virginia for percent of residents vaccinated. The Alaska vaccine tracker is [available online](#) as is a [vaccine dashboard](#) for more up-to-date data.
- There is a several day lag in reporting some vaccinations so the dashboard does not yet reflect all vaccinations that have been given. All vaccines allocated to Alaska for December and January have been distributed or are otherwise intended for a specific appointment within the month of January.
- 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 January 10 through January 16, 2021, 1,702 new Alaska cases were reported, a 19% decrease from last week, for a total of 50,296 cumulative cases in Alaskans.
- Cumulative hospitalizations increased to 1,130 with 10 reported as occurring this week. Hospitalization reports often lag and only 1,080 hospitalizations were reported at this time last week, so there are 50 hospitalizations newly reported this week including ones that began during previous weeks.
- Deaths among Alaska residents increased by 5 (228 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 Jan 10–Jan 16 may be reported in future.
- 48 new nonresident cases were identified this week, for a total of 1,642 cases.

Statewide Percentage of Daily Tests with Positive Results

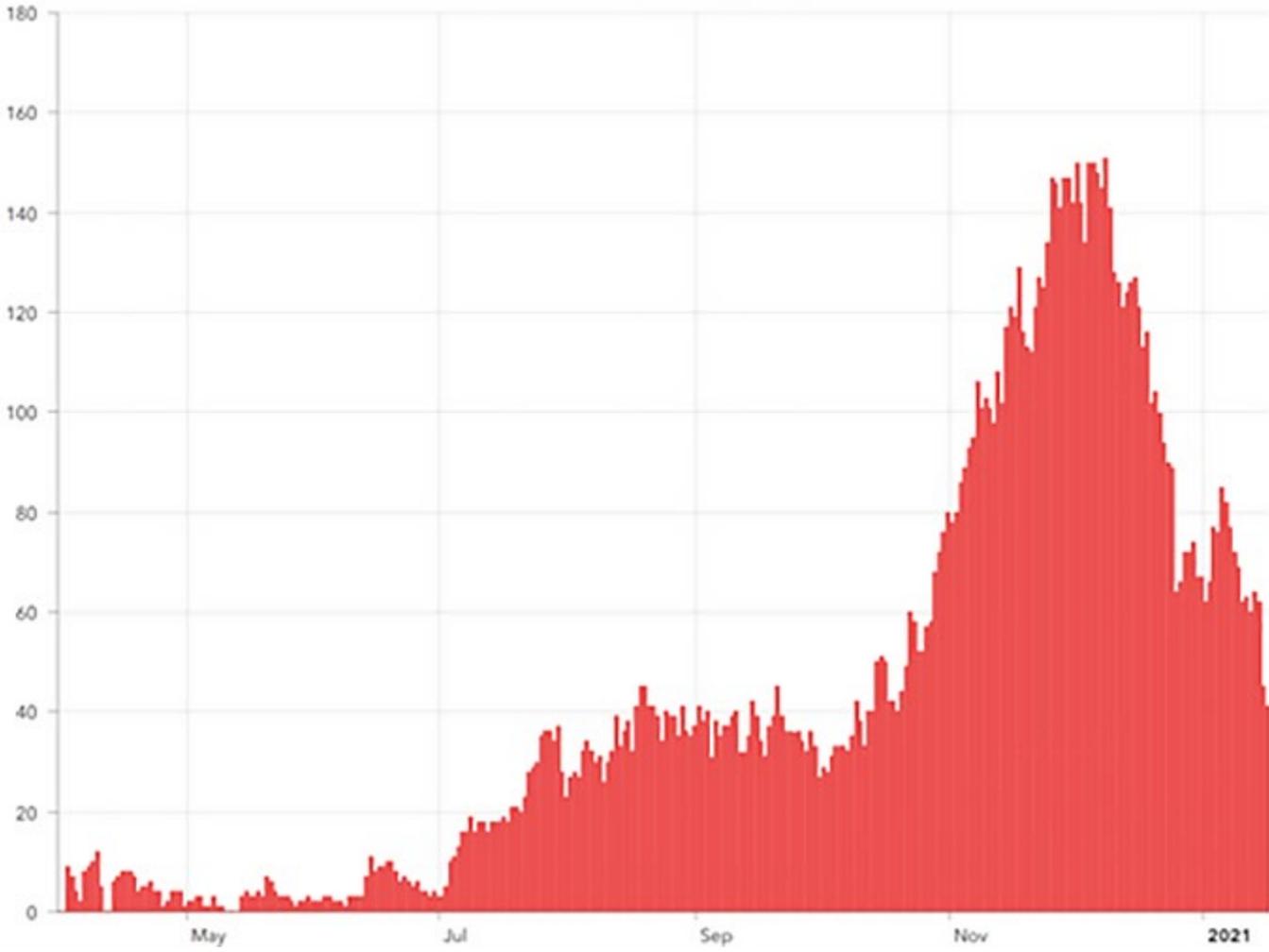
(Seven day rolling average)



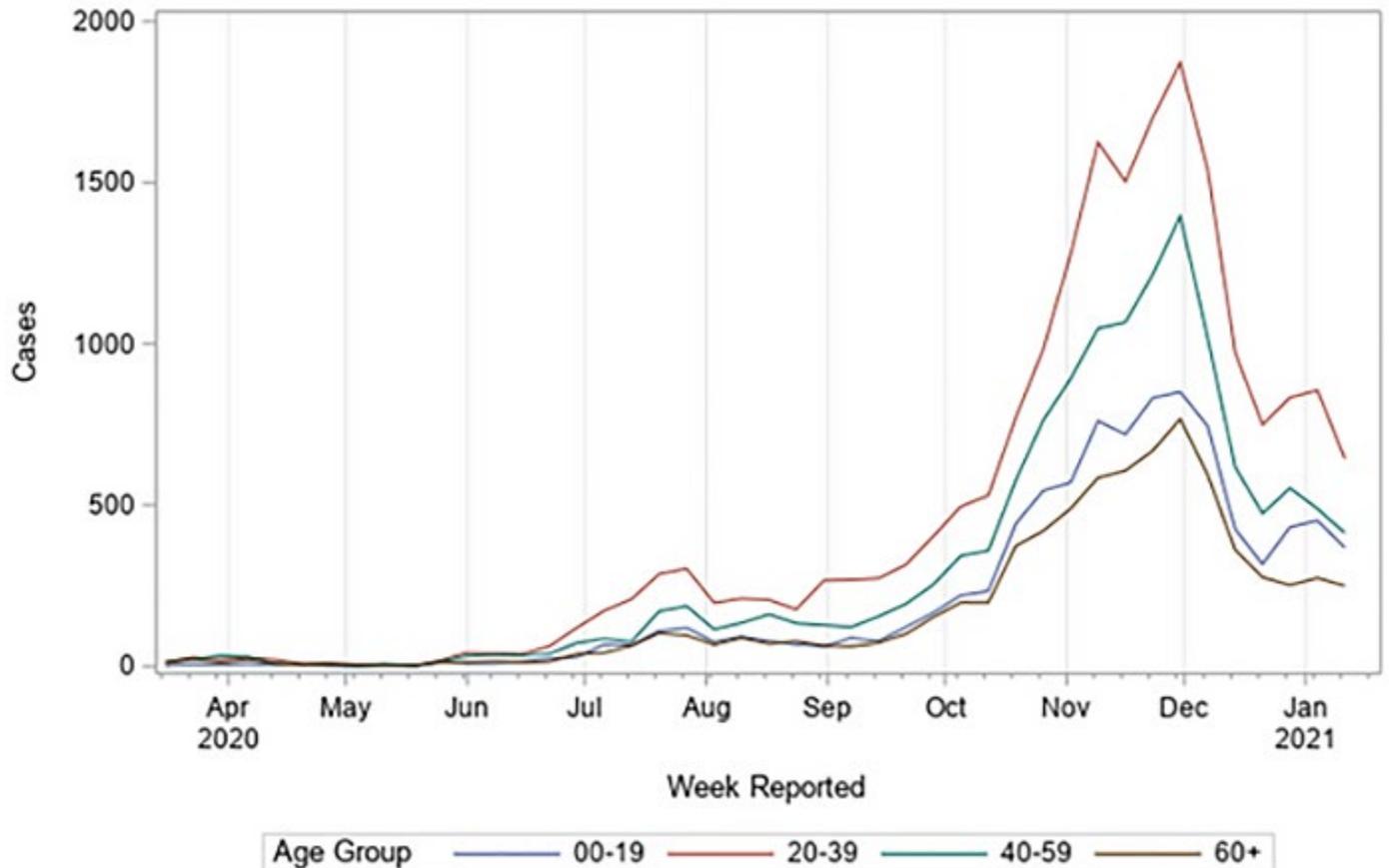
Health care capacity

- On January 18, 59 Alaskans with confirmed COVID-19 were hospitalized and 8 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



Cases by Week Reported and Age Group



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

Additional informational resources:

- The State of Alaska [COVID-19 vaccine status update](#) page.
- The State of Alaska [COVID-19 information page](#) provides 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](#) (note: some data may change as more information comes to light through contact tracing and other public health work).

For DHSS media inquiries, please contact clinton.bennett@alaska.gov