



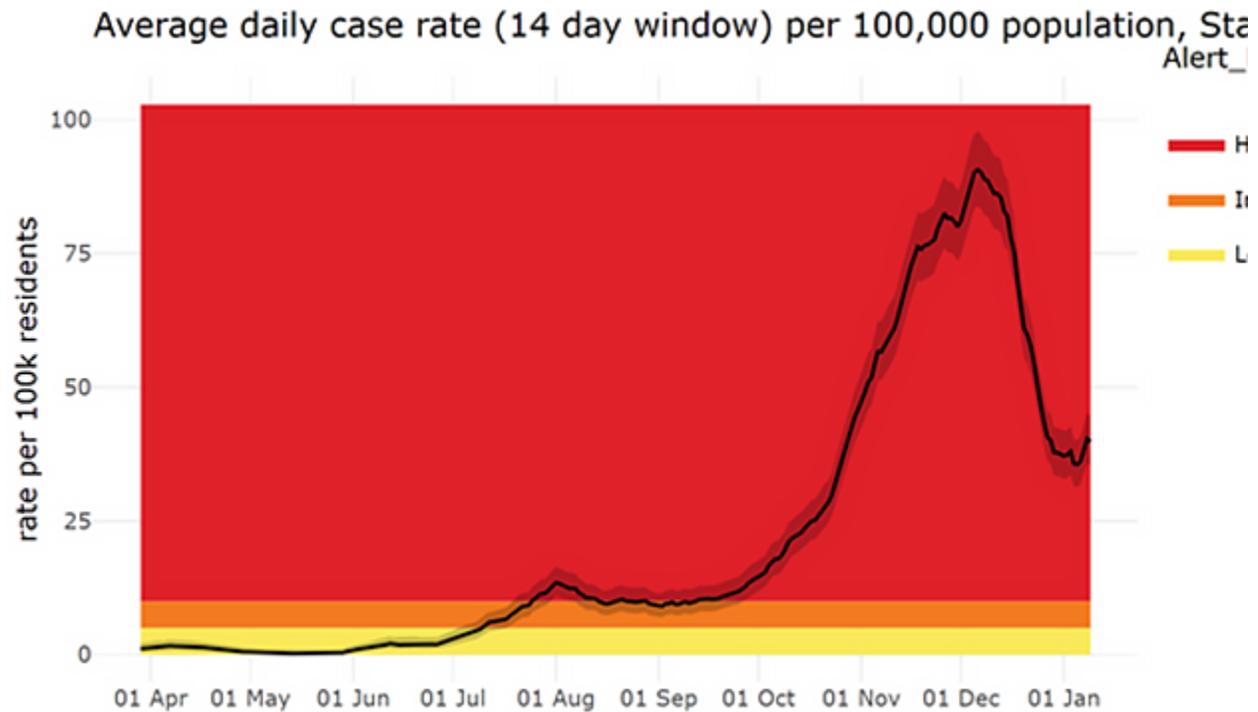
## Alaska Department of Health & Social Services Weekly Case Update January 3 – January 9, 2021

### Status report

- The daily growth rate of viral transmission in Alaska reversed from 0.26% to -4.2% during December, indicating a general downward trajectory during that time period. However, in the last week the trajectory has flattened out and the growth rate increased to -2.8%, raising concern for an uptick in transmission.
- 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 is ongoing. Two vaccines for COVID-19 have received FDA emergency use authorization and are currently being distributed in Alaska.
- Currently eligible groups for vaccination include those in Phase 1a: healthcare workers and residents in nursing homes, and those in Phase 1a 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](https://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 1/10/2021, cases of the UK variant have been confirmed in multiple regions of the United States. 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.
- **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 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 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 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.



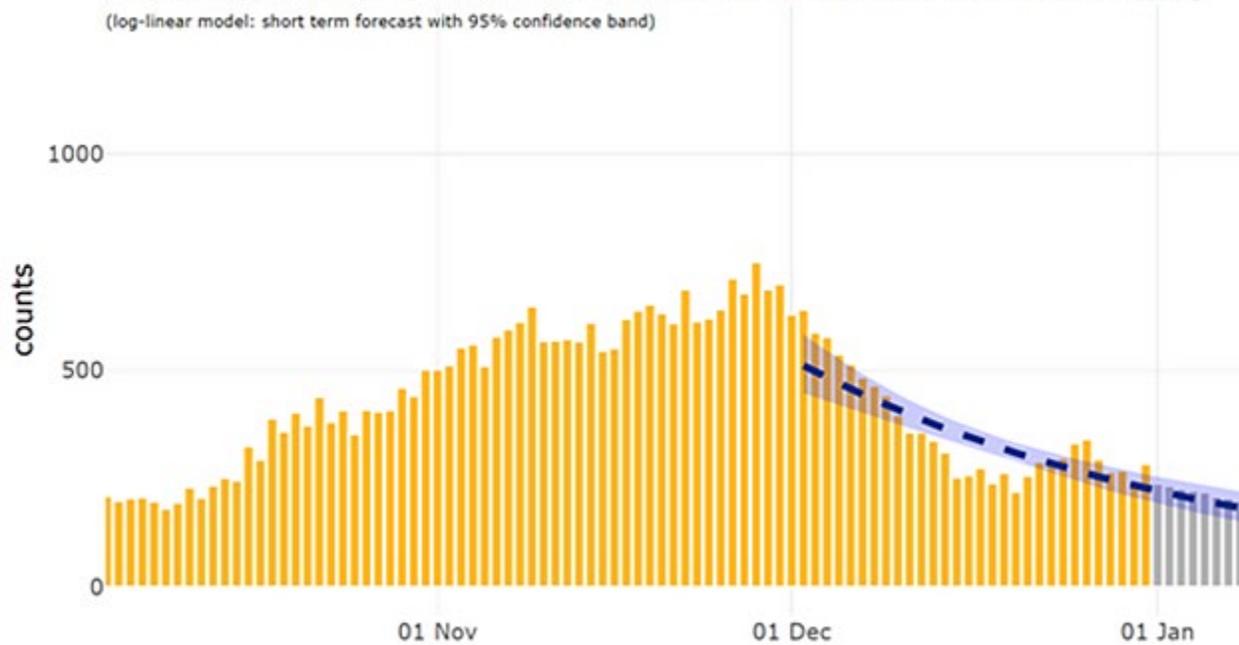
## Case trends and predictions

- 2,107 new cases were reported in Alaskans last week. This is a small increase from the week before and 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. A large increase was seen in the Northwest Region, from 25.3 to 46.6. Smaller increases were also seen in the Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Region, the Fairbanks and Interior Regions, and the Southeast Regions. All regions of Alaska other than the Northern 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 11, 2021 is -2.8% and new cases are expected to halve every 24 days based on current modeling, an increase from last week 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 22– Dec 5	Case rates Nov 29– Dec 12*	Case rates Dec 5– Dec 19	Case rates Dec 13– Dec 26	Case rates Dec 20– Jan 2
Anchorage Municipality	89.2	87.7	73.3	46.4	40.0
Fairbanks North Star Borough	41.0	65.5	61.8	33.8	32.6
Interior Region except Fairbanks	48.7	46.9	35.0	23.2	23.8
Juneau City and Borough	23.5	23.7	17.0	14.7	13.6
Kenai Peninsula Borough	105.7	75.5	60.7	40.0	22.3
Matanuska-Susitna Region	154.4	113.9	62.0	48.2	48.2
Northern Southeast Region	27.2	19.2	15.0	12.6	7.0

Northwest Region	65.6	68.2	58.9	36.5	25.3	46.6
Southern Southeast Region	14.7	14.0	9.0	5.0	6.1	10.0
Southwest Region	72.9	117.2	89.0	50.9	42.5	35.8
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region	172.9	164.8	158.0	73.3	144.2	152.8
Statewide	89.7	85.8	65.2	41.1	38.6	39.8

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

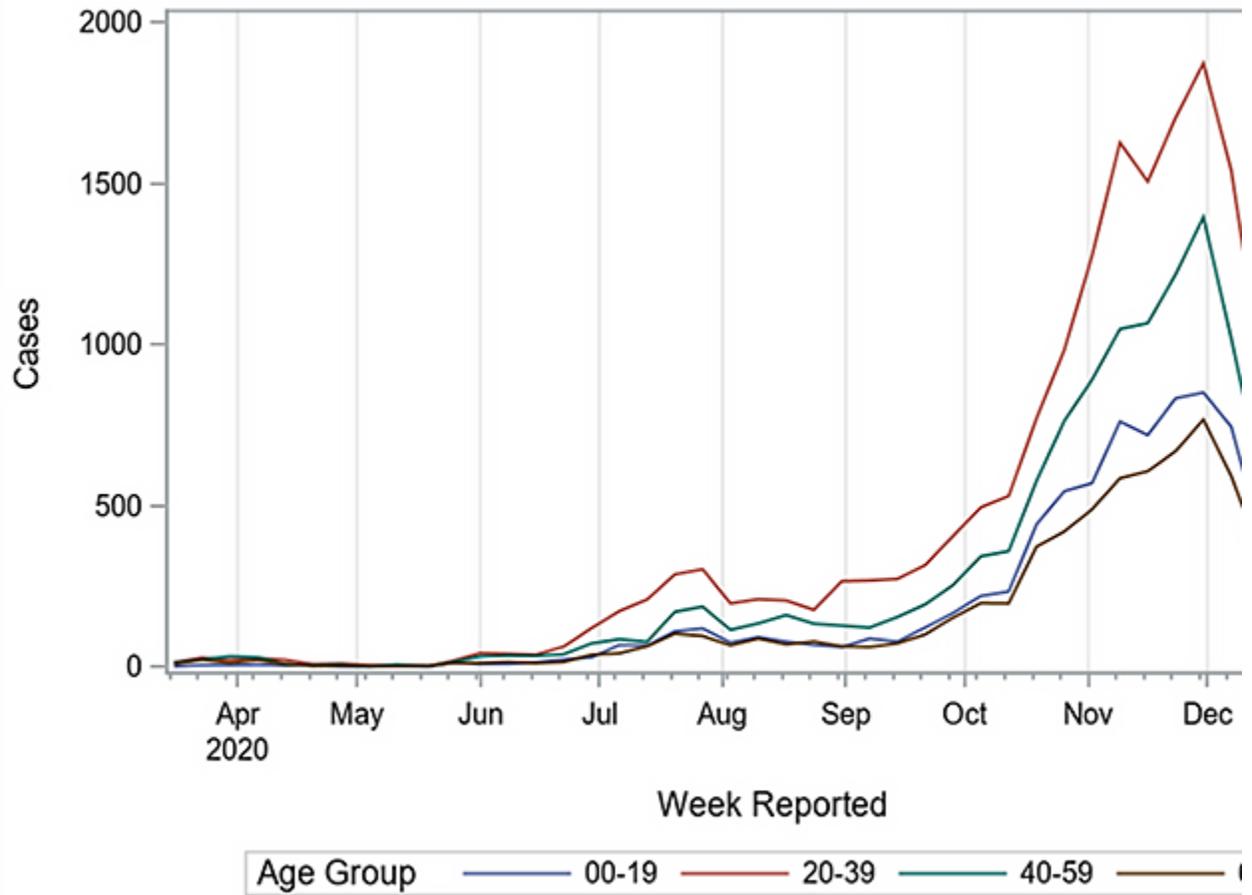
## Vaccines status update

- 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 months. As of January 8, more than 25,000 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 January 3 through January 9, 2021, 2,055 new Alaska cases were reported, a 3% increase from last week, for a total of 48,624 cumulative cases in Alaskans.
- Cumulative hospitalizations increased to 1,080 with 15 reported as occurring this week. Hospitalization reports often lag and only 1,013 hospitalizations were reported at this time last week, so there are 67 hospitalizations newly reported this week including ones that began during previous weeks.
- Deaths among Alaska residents increased by 6 (223 total). All but two 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 3–Jan 9 may be reported in future.
- There were 43 new nonresident cases identified this week, for a total of 1,594 cases.

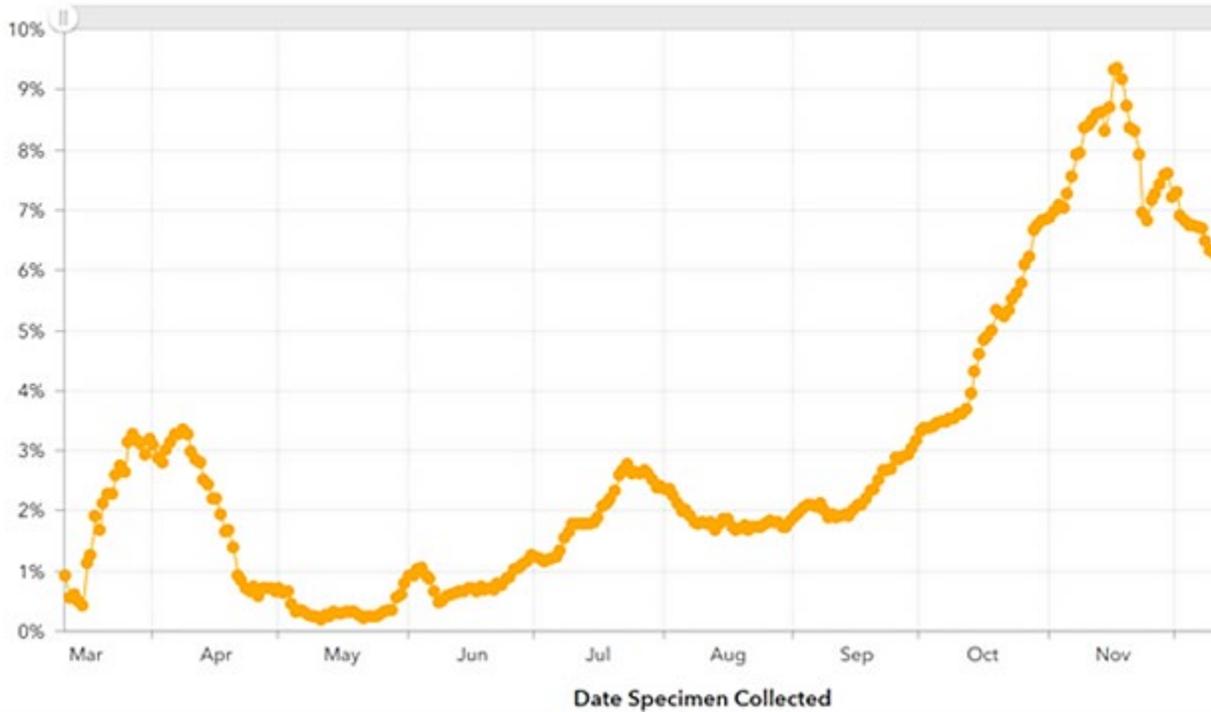
## Cases by week reported and age group



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

## Statewide Percentage of Daily Tests with Positive Results

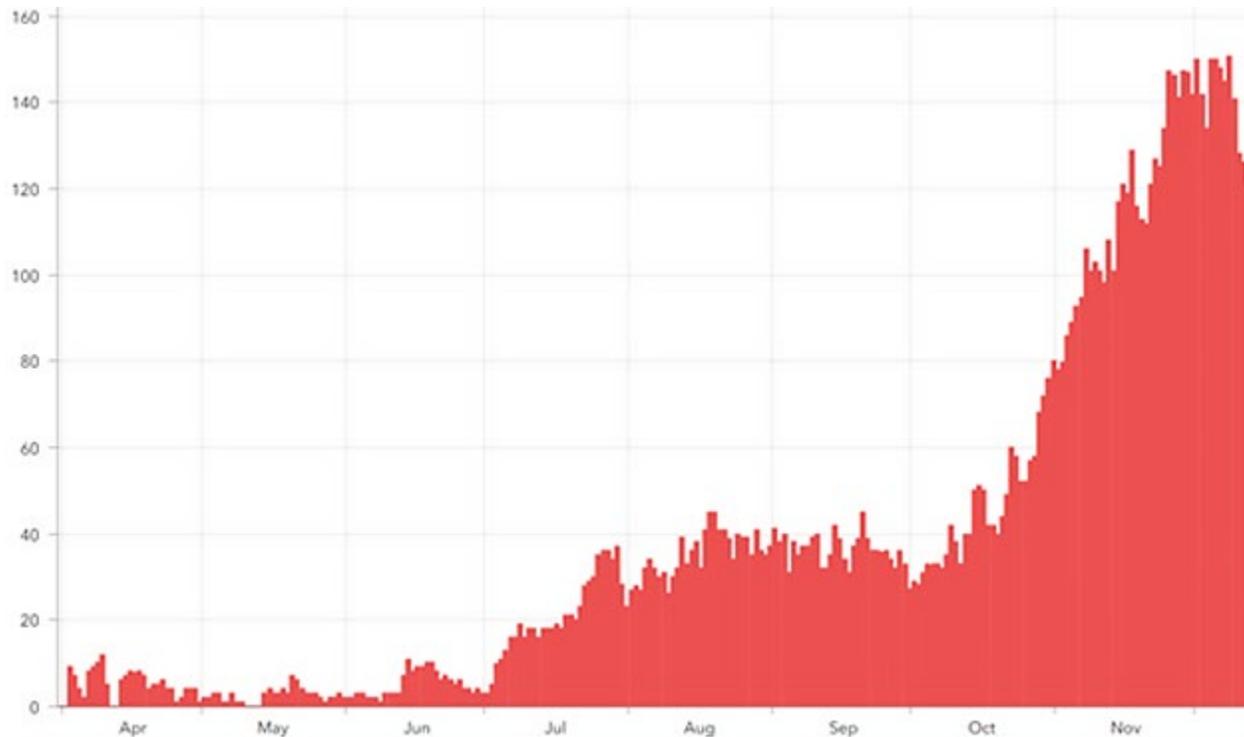
(Seven day rolling average)



## Health care capacity

- On January 10, 74 Alaskans with confirmed COVID-19 were hospitalized and 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-19 beds occupied



### **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](mailto:clinton.bennett@alaska.gov).