

## ALPHA 2021 Resolution 2021-01

### Alaska COVID-19 Response

**Whereas**, SARS-CoV-2 infection, which causes COVID-19 disease in humans, poses a significant risk to the health of Alaskans, and Alaskan Communities

**Whereas**, since the reopening of Alaska at the end of May, the number of daily reported cases has increased exponentially<sup>i</sup>, and most areas of the state are at the highest alert level with cases still rising.<sup>ii</sup>

**Whereas**, the Alaska public health system has faced significant budgetary cuts in recent years and is straining to meet increased need for public health services, including the ability to rapidly test, report, contact trace, isolate cases, and quarantine contacts.<sup>iii</sup>

**Whereas**, Alaska's hospitals have limited capacity both in hospital beds<sup>iv</sup>, as well as adequate healthcare workers<sup>v</sup> to provide necessary care, and case acceleration in localities with no community controls increase hospitalizations in major hubs.

**Whereas**, the number of hospitalizations<sup>vi</sup> and deaths<sup>vii</sup> due to COVID-19 are disproportionately higher among Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders, American Indian/Alaska Natives, and other racial/ethnic minority groups in Alaska.<sup>viii</sup>

**Whereas**, the spread of COVID-19 is driven by the number of people who are infected by an infectious person, which depends on:

1. The length of time an infectious person is out in society;
2. How frequently an infectious person interacts with others; and
3. How much virus is transmitted from an infectious person to others

**Therefore**, be it resolved that the Alaska Public Health Association support the implementation of evidence-based measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus including, but not limited to the following:

- **Institute Statewide Measures to Slow the Spread of COVID-19.** A statewide mask mandate, travel restrictions, and strict limits on gathering sizes can help slow the spread of COVID-19.<sup>ix</sup>
- **Provide Additional State Supports for Individuals, Families and Businesses.** Make public assistance options available and widely known, ensure access to affordable health care regardless of preexisting conditions, boost supplemental nutrition programs, economic relief, and unemployment benefits. Support employers to offer paid sick leave to employees who are symptomatic, close contacts of someone who has tested positive, or who receives a positive test result. Provide access to vaccinations to all Alaskans free of charge.<sup>x</sup>
- **Provide Additional support for Alaska's Public Health System.** Including increasing the number of people working as contact tracers/case investigators, and leverage technology and public health education to reduce the time between someone getting a positive test and getting information on what to do.

**Be it further resolved that**, the Alaska Public Health Association supports extending the state's Public Health Emergency Order as necessary to respond to the current crisis, as well as during the recovery phase of the epidemic.

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<sup>i</sup> CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). CDC COVID Data Tracker. [https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases\\_casesper100klast7days](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days)

<sup>ii</sup> State of Alaska, DHSS Case Count Summary, December 4, 2020. <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/AKDHSS/bulletins/2afbad8?reqfrom=share>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/anchorage/2020/11/28/its-bad-its-really-bad-anchorage-nurses-under-pressure-as-covid-19-pushes-busy-hospitals-to-the-brink/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2020/12/04/tracking-covid-19-in-alaska-12-deaths-and-756-new-cases-reported-friday/>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2020/12/03/state-puts-out-a-hiring-call-for-nurses-contact-tracers-data-analysts-to-help-with-alaskas-covid-19-response/>

<sup>vi</sup> State of Alaska, DHSS Epidemiology Bulletin No. 12, Summary of COVID-19 Hospitalizations, Alaska. Oct. 29,2020

<sup>vii</sup> State of Alaska, DHSS Epidemiology Bulletin No. 13, Summary of COVID-19 Deaths, Alaska. Oct. 29,2020

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.alaskapublic.org/2020/12/01/listen-coronavirus-further-widening-race-correlated-health-disparities/>

<sup>ix</sup> Honein MA, Christie A, Rose DA, et al. Summary of Guidance for Public Health Strategies to Address High Levels of Community Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and Related Deaths, December 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1860-1867. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6949e2>

<sup>x</sup> Honein MA, Christie A, Rose DA, et al. Summary of Guidance for Public Health Strategies to Address High Levels of Community Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and Related Deaths, December 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1860-1867. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6949e2>