

Message from the President & CEO

For several weeks, YKHC has prepared our staff, facilities and communities for COVID-19. Our staff have received education and drilled for treating potential COVID-19 patients. We have added significantly more beds in the hospital and secured additional facilities through our partners for patients needing isolation and other uses.

YKHC has also provided our communities constant communication and education via our website at www.ykhc.org/covid-19, social media, email, weekly teleconferences with tribes and partners, radio interviews, and public service announcements on KCUK, KEDI, KICY, KSKO, and KYUK.

Mandatory staff health screenings began in mid-March; staff have trained on the proper usage of personal protective equipment (PPE); health aides have trained to test for COVID-19 in villages; and we have plans to increase testing and perform contact tracing in villages.

All villages should be proactive and designate a suitable facility where people with COVID-19 can isolate if their home is small and has elders or others with serious health conditions. I strongly encourage tribal governments to designate a representative to attend our weekly teleconferences to ask questions and receive guidance on COVID-19 preparations. In any given week, only a quarter of our 50 villages participate. Tribes should email publicrelations@ykhc.org to receive an invitation.

We significantly expanded our surge capacity.

The hospital expanded our inpatient capacity from 26 to 45 beds. Further, we have added eight new beds dedicated for higher acuity patients. Patients with respiratory illness have been separated from all other patients.

Drive-thru COVID-19 testing is available in Bethel. As of April 1, we tested more than 40 people for COVID-19 from Bethel and villages with zero positive tests. Several results are pending.

Lastly, we continue to work with our community and government partners to prepare external care sites that will be ready, if needed.

For over two months we have prepared for COVID-19. Although we order more PPE each and every day, if we encounter a large surge of COVID-19 patients we do not have enough PPE due to global shortages and rationing by manufacturers.

We are also severely challenged by living in a remote area with 50 villages with no road access to the hospital. If a large surge happens simultaneously in numerous villages, our health system will be overwhelmed.



Dan Winkelman,
President & CEO

If you have symptoms like a cough, fever or shortness of breath and think you have the virus, do not go to your village clinic and do not go to the Emergency Room in Bethel. Instead, call your village clinic, or in Bethel, call 543-6949.

News about COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, is updated regularly. To learn the latest on the spread of the virus and local, state and national directives for travel and isolation, we invite you to visit our website at www.ykhc.org/covid-19.

This special edition of the Messenger provides information you will find useful for recognizing symptoms and protecting yourself and your family during this epidemic.

MESSAGE, from p. 1

Moreover, under this worst case scenario, and even with National Guard support, there will likely not be enough timely medevacs for all patients. This is precisely why a no travel mandate for nonessential business in rural Alaska is so very important.

All of us are more vulnerable due to our remoteness and lack of widespread, rapid testing. For these reasons, please take the mandate seriously, practice social distancing and good hand hygiene . . . our health depends on it.

Quyana,



NON-URGENT MEDICAID TRAVEL ON HOLD

By YKHC, March 25, 2020

With the outbreak of COVID-19, the State of Alaska issued new guidelines for Medicaid travel.

YKHC is only allowed by the State of Alaska to book Medicaid travel that is deemed emergent by a provider. The state deems a patient emergent if they cannot wait 90 days to be seen. During this time period, YK Pay will only be used for emergent travel. YKHC expects this hold to be lifted in June. This hold on Medicaid travel does not affect patients' ability to be seen in their village clinics. Patients can also be seen in Bethel; Medicaid is only limiting non-emergent travel; not appointments.

For all emergent travel, a letter of medical necessity must be provided to explain why the patient cannot wait 90 days to be seen. Walk-in ER patients will not require a letter of medical necessity if the case is life or limb.

You can download the signs below and find other resources on our website at www.ykhc.org/covid-19

ATTENTION
CORONAVIRUS – COVID19

RISK ALERT

This location has a person with high risk for contracting COVID-19.

If you have a **cough, runny nose, fever**, or any possible exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual, or have recently traveled in-state, out of state or out of country, **you should not enter unless absolutely necessary.**

Quyana for considering the safety of yourself and others



ATTENTION
CORONAVIRUS – COVID19

This location has a person who is under self-quarantine as a result of—

- having recently traveled in-state, out of state or out of country
- having a cough, runny nose, and/or fever
- possible exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual

This person is staying inside and monitoring for signs of infection or worsening symptoms.

You should not enter unless absolutely necessary.



Quyana for considering the safety of yourself and others

COVID-19 Disinfection for YK Delta Homes

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with others, stay home if you're sick, clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, and wash your hands often. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Here are some things that homes without running water can do using household bleach.

Using bleach to disinfect surfaces

Wear gloves to protect your hands from bleach.



Mix 4 teaspoons liquid bleach with 1 quart of water to make a **strong** cleaning solution (500-800 ppm).



4 tsp bleach + 1 quart of water

First, clean soiled surfaces to remove dirt and grime.

Next, wipe the bleach solution on "high touch" hard surfaces daily like door knobs, light fixtures, tables, counters, toys, toilet handles, faucet handles, and sinks.



Leave the surfaces wet for 10 minutes, enough time to kill the germs. Rewipe if needed.



Using a handwashing basin

If you use a handwashing basin, make sure the water in the basin is changed regularly during the day.

Consider adding a small amount of bleach to basin water, so that germs don't grow. Add



1 tsp bleach + 8 cups water (= 1/2 gallon)

1 teaspoon liquid bleach to a half gallon of water. This will create a **mild** bleach solution, slightly stronger than pool water.



Soapy wash water



Rinse water (with bleach)

Having two separate basins is best – one for soapy wash water and one for clean rinse water (with bleach).

Do NOT mix dish soap in with the bleach solution.

For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html>



Protect Yourself and Others From COVID-19

Aulukluki Elpenek Allat-llu COVID-19-amek



Know How it Spreads — *Nalluvkenaku Qaillun Sagtelaucia*

- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- *Arcaqertuq naullutengenritlerkamun mat'umek naulluulriit/quselriit avatiitni uitanritlerkaq.*
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- *Man'a sagtelaryukaat yugteggun yuut mallgulluteng uitakuneng (arvinlegen (6) it'ganret iluatni).*



Clean Your Hands Often — *Unaceten Erurturluki*

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- *Unaceten miilirluki eruraqluki yuinaat (20) cetyagaat cipluku.*
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.** Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- *Miilailkuvet wall'u mertailkan unacet ciissiircautiitnek mingugmek aturluten yuinaat pingayun percent-aneq (60%) cipluku alcohol-alegmek. Unaceten mingunqegcaarluki kinernatkaatnun.*



Avoid Close Contact — *Yugnun Mallguurutevkenak*

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- *Mallegteksaunaki naulluulriit.*
- **Put distance between yourself and other people** and don't shake hands. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
- *Yugnun mallguurutevkenak unaciurpek'nak-llu. Una arcaqertuq naulluuqeryukaaralrianun..*



Stay Home, Especially If Sick — *Nevni Uitauruten, Arcaqerluku Naulluukuvet*

- Alaska is under a Government mandate to stay home, except for necessary travel.
- *Alaska-m Anguyagtiin alerquagaakut nem'etaurasqelluta, ayagnarqekuvet taugaam piyugngaluten.*
- **If you have traveled out of the YK Delta in the past two weeks and you have a fever, cough and shortness of breath, call ahead before seeking care.**
- *Ayallrukuvet maaken Kuigpiim Kusquqviim-llu nuniignek, malruk nitilignek iluagni, puqlaniquvet, quserluten wall'u anerniqluten, qayagauqiu 543-6949.*
- **In villages, call your clinic. In Bethel, call 543-6949.**
- *Nunacuarni emsuvici qayagaurulu. Mamterillerni qayagaurulu 543-6949.*
- The stay-at-home mandate may continue for several weeks—keep a 30-day food supply at home.
- *Nem'etaurnarqaaten qavcini nitilini agiirtellriani - upnarqaaten neqkanek ataucimi iralumi aturarkavnek*



Clean and Disinfect — *Carriryaraq*

- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- *Carrirturluki yuut agturturalrit unuaquaqaan. Ilakluki nem iluantellriit: estuulut, amiiget teguyarait, kenurraat nipcessuutait, teguyarat, qanercuutet, negtessuutet, qurrutet, unacissuutet-llu.*
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- *Cat iqakata, carrirluki: Ciumek miilakun merkun-llu erurluku, ciissiircaun aturpailegpegu.*
- If your community does not have clean running water, go to the YKHC website: www.ykhc.org/covid-19.
- *Nunavni cuplukun mer'ilkuvet, yuvrirniaran YKHC-m website-aa: www.ykhc.org/covid-19.*

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW CORONAVIRUS—FAQS

Is the coronavirus worse than the flu? Why are there travel restrictions and canceled events?

At present, there is no vaccine for this new coronavirus as there is for many forms of the flu. No one has immunity from the new coronavirus, because it's new to human beings. The new coronavirus is contagious, and can cause severe disease, even death. People are advised, and in many areas, mandated, to stay home.

Can coronavirus live in heat? Will the outbreak stop when it gets warm outside?

Several countries currently affected by the new coronavirus outbreak are experiencing summer weather. Some viral illnesses, like the flu, seem to be less common in warmer months, but it is still possible to catch them during that time. Investigations are exploring the effects of temperature and weather on the spread of this new coronavirus.

Could I get sick from the new coronavirus more than once?

With the first COVID-19 patients recovering from the disease, researchers are exploring this question, but it may be some time before answers are known. Some patients may continue to test positive for the new coronavirus for a time after their symptoms have resolved.

Why is it called a “coronavirus?”

Corona means “crown,” and coronaviruses have a “crown” of protruding points on their surface that give them a characteristic appearance when seen under a microscope. Coronaviruses are a whole family of viruses. There are many different kinds. Some only affect animals; some have been circulating among human beings for years, causing mild colds. Others have caused small, severe human disease outbreaks in the past, such as SARS in 2003 and MERS in 2012. The new coronavirus is different from these, and was only identified in December 2019.

What is isolation?

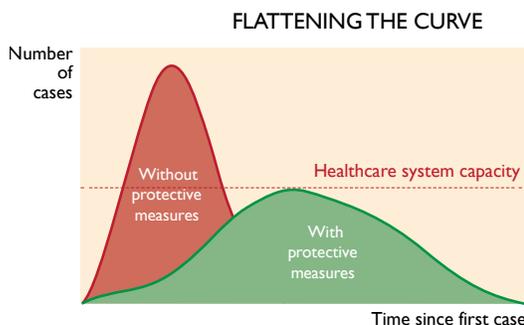
For people who are confirmed to have COVID-19, isolation is appropriate. Isolation is a health care term that means keeping people who are infected with a contagious illness away from those who are not infected.

What is “flattening the curve”?

Flattening the curve refers to using protective practices to slow the rate of COVID-19 infection so hospitals have room, supplies and doctors for all of the patients who need care.

A large number of people becoming very sick over the course of a few days could overwhelm a hospital or care facility. Too many people becoming severely ill with COVID-19 at roughly the same time could result in a shortage of hospital beds, equipment or doctors.

On the other hand, if that same large number of patients arrived at the hospital at a slower rate, for example, over the course of several weeks, the line of the graph would look like a longer, flatter curve.



The pandemic can seem overwhelming, but in truth, every person can help slow down the spread of COVID-19. By doing your part, you can make a big difference to your health, and that of others around you.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Covid-19 Nurse Triage Line 543-6949

– If you are feeling sick, or seeking medical advice.

Behavioral Health COVID-19 Emotional Support Phone line 543-6272

– As part of our response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, we are starting a phone line for those who are experiencing anxiety and worry (this is most of us).

We can supply information, resources, brief telephone counseling, referrals, and, most importantly, someone to talk to and listen to your concerns.

Talk to a behavioral health team member and get some help to alleviate your worries.

Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday

OTHER RESOURCES

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Disaster Distress Helpline

1-800-985-5990

– or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

YKHC Behavioral Health 543-6100

– For appointment

Behavioral Health Emergency Services 543-6499

– For suicidal ideation, severe depression, decompensation, or serious issues call 24/7

YKHC Website

www.ykhc.org/covid-19

Centers for disease Control & Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/>

Many YKHC employees are working from home or have been diverted from their regular duties to assist with YKHC's coordinated response to COVID-19.

Your understanding is greatly appreciated as we all work together to respond to this pandemic for the safety of all.