

Reminder about essential travel during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Although YKHC encourages YK Delta residents to avoid non-essential travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important village residents continue to **keep necessary and essential medical appointments** that might require travel to Bethel or Anchorage during this time.



Essential medical travel for village residents include appointments for things like:

- Cancer treatments
- Pre-natal visits and giving birth
- Severe dental issues
- Heart attacks or follow-ups
- Cancer diagnosis related screenings (like mammograms)

It is important for the health and safety of patients to continue to be seen by advanced providers in Bethel or Anchorage for these types of medical appointments.

How can Tribes help ensure these critical visits continue?

While many communities have implemented testing and outside-village quarantine requirements before returning home, the **safest** place an individual can quarantine after travel is in their village, in their own home. This ensures they are surrounded by their support network, have access to their medications or necessities, and are at reduced risk of COVID-19 exposure in a larger community.

Unfortunately YKHC cannot and Medicaid will not pay for lodging, meals, airfare or transportation for individuals to quarantine outside of their village (in Bethel or Anchorage) when:

- they are not positive for COVID-19
- they are awaiting test results prior or during travel
- their only risk factor has been out-of-village or out-of-region travel.

Please remember, the City of Bethel no longer offers resources to house individuals in local hotels to complete a precautionary quarantine. Lodging in Bethel is limited and also may not be available to house individuals prevented from returning home due to village travel restrictions.

Some patients have missed cancer treatments or pre-natal appointments because they are concerned they won't be let home and will be stranded in a community where neither YKHC or the State has funding to provide lodging, meals, airfare or transportation.

As Tribes implement lockdowns and travel restrictions, please remember it is important for essential medical travel to be allowed to continue.

