



**THE FUTURE OF
OUR VILLAGES
DEPENDS ON HOW
WE ACT NOW**

ISOLATE TO SAVE LIVES
CARINGISEASY.COM

TIME OUT!

SEE PAGE 3 FOR A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT & CEO DAN WINKELMAN

The most dangerous thing about COVID-19 is that you can be carrying the virus without knowing it—even before you show any symptoms, you can be infecting people around you—friends, family, elders and neighbors. Wearing a mask and distancing are the most effective weapons we have now to fight the spread of COVID-19.

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COVID-19 RESOURCES

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

— Talk to a behavioral health team member and get some help to alleviate your worries.
9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday–Friday

Behavioral Health Emergency Services

543-6499

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

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 Website

www.ykhc.org/covid-19

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/>

RESOURCES

YKHC main switchboard 543-6000
Toll Free 1-800-478-3321

APPOINTMENTS

Outpatient Clinics 543-6442
Dental 543-6229
Optometry 543-6336
Audiology..... 543-6466

SUBREGIONAL CLINICS

Aniak..... 675-4556
Emmonak..... 949-3500
St. Mary's 438-3500
Toksook Bay..... 427-3500
Hooper Bay..... 758-3500

SERVICES

Inpatient (North Wing) 543-6330
Pharmacy Refill Line 543-6988
Toll Free 877-543-6988
Physical Therapy 543-6342
Women's Health 543-6296
Irrivik Birthing Center 543-6346
Behavioral Health Services 543-6100
BH CRISIS RESPONSE LINE 543-6499
Substance Abuse Treatment 543-6730
Sobering Center 543-6830
Developmental Disabilities 543-2762
Emergency Room 543-6395
Office of Environmental Health & Engineering,
Injury Contro & EMS..... 543-6420

ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

Administration..... 543-6020
Human Resources..... 543-6060
Public Relations 543-6013
Travel Management..... 543-6360

The Messenger is a monthly publication produced by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation's Public Relations Department as a report to Tribal Members.

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The Messenger is also available for download on our website at www.ykhc.org/messenger. Please ask permission to reprint articles or pictures.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ATTENTION: If you speak Yup'ik, free translations services are available to you. Call 907-543-6603.

YKHC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Message

from the President & CEO

TIME OUT!

THE SITUATION

As of October 28, 2020, the test positivity rate for Bethel has reached 7.14 percent during the past two weeks and nearly 20 percent for the Kusilvak area. Our rate of COVID-19 infections is more than 87 per 100,000 people in Bethel and more than 280 per 100,000 for the Kusilvak area.

This is the highest in the State of Alaska and if the YK Delta were its own state, it would be the fourth highest in the nation. We also have several villages and Bethel with wide-spread community transmission of COVID-19. More than 30 of our 50 villages in the YK Delta have had evidence of COVID-19 and we suspect it in many more.

Recently, we had numerous medevacs, hospitalizations and four deaths as a result of COVID-19. Lastly, COVID-19 rates this high in other parts of the world and the Lower 48, even in rural settings, have led to increased hospitalizations and deaths in the following weeks and months. See the letter I sent to our region's communities on October 28, starting on page. 12, and the [Public Alert](#) on our website* and Facebook page.

Therefore, you should assume that anyone outside of your household may have COVID-19 and you and your family should take all necessary precautions, like universal masking when around people outside of your household, practice good hand hygiene, clean high touch surfaces, do not touch your face, and social distance when possible.

If you cannot name how many people with whom you have been in close contact (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) within the last 14 days, that is too many.

The following are some examples of what our contact tracers have learned:

- Asymptomatic individuals (people who are infected but show no signs of illness) infecting up to 40 people.
- Asymptomatic individuals visiting more than 80 people during their infectious period.
- We continue to see infections occurring at small and large gatherings, especially amongst friends and family.
- Superspreader events that exposed more than 90 people to possible infection.

- Delays by individuals experiencing very mild symptoms (runny nose, body aches) to get tested and self-quarantine, causing others to get sick.

WHAT'S OUR GAMEPLAN?

FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES: As COVID-19 increases this winter throughout the YK Delta, what can you do to help stop the spread?

Stop gathering with friends and family outside of your household and take precautions at work or when you are outside of your household! We know this is difficult. That is why COVID-19 continues to spread around the world.

Some people say, "I should just get COVID-19 so I can get it over with!" Although most people will be okay during and after their infection, by getting the disease one propagates the global pandemic and becomes an unwilling participant in spreading it to others who may not tolerate the disease well, use limited medical resources, or even die.

Changing our behavior is hard, especially since we are all social beings. However, it is only by adopting COVID-19 precautions that we will be able to break the cycle of COVID-19 transmission.

FOR BUSINESSES: To protect customers and employees all businesses should practice COVID-19 protocols like universal masking, good hand hygiene, social distancing and additional cleanings. The CDC has guidance available on its website. Strong adherence to these protocols reduces the risk that entire businesses will have to temporarily shut down.

Stringent mask wearing by all staff and mandatory social distancing will reduce the number of exposed coworkers and can turn an otherwise large outbreak in the workplace to one that is smaller, thereby, allowing the business to protect more of its workforce and to stay open.

Businesses that are able to should consider telecommuting for all employees who can. Many jobs do not allow telecommuting because of the nature of the position. However, administrative and other positions are ideal for telecommuting.

Telecommuting increases social distancing amongst workers, even for those who cannot telecommute because it reduces the number of staff in a facility, thereby increasing

COVID-19 UPDATE

distance amongst workers and decreasing the risk for those who cannot telecommute. By reducing your staff in a given facility, you also decrease the risk of a larger outbreak which could force your business to temporarily shut down. By allowing telecommuting, employers communicate that they care about the health of all their workers and their families, even those that cannot telecommute.

Ensuring all staff know to watch themselves and others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to not go to work when symptomatic is critical. Regular messaging by employers is needed.

Also, you can designate staff to call into our monthly Agency call for businesses to receive data and guidance on COVID-19 in the region and to ask your questions. To sign up for the call, send an email to publicrelations@ykhc.org.

FOR CITY AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS: There are villages that already had community spread and were able to break the cycle of transmission. Through their leadership, notifying the community of positive cases and/or community spread, and quickly taking strong public health actions with a willing community, they were able to stop community spread.

Unfortunately, we may see the cycle of community spread start anew in those and other villages due to the highly infectious nature of the coronavirus. Therefore, we must continue to be vigilant and take all necessary COVID-19 precautions like universal masking when around people outside your household, practice good hand hygiene, don't touch your face and social distance when possible.

Develop COVID-19 support systems now for when people become ill. After receiving the prior approval of your accountant and attorney and using the necessary documentation, use your COVID-19 funds to hire temporary workers to assist with chores that help people stay in quarantine, like delivering or hauling water and sewer. Ensuring your members have adequate food, water and heat while in quarantine is essential for any effective COVID-19 tribal support program.

Also, you should designate staff to call into YKHC's weekly tribal/city government leadership meeting to receive data and guidance on COVID-19 in the region and to ask your questions. To sign up for the call, send an email to publicrelations@ykhc.org.

FOR OUR SEVEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: We have a weekly meeting with school district leadership to share the latest COVID-19 data, infection control methodologies and

best practices. Continuing to attend those with your staff is important. Ensuring staff, students and parents know to watch themselves and others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and to not attend school or work when symptomatic, is critical.

TESTING: Free COVID-19 testing is available most week days in Bethel at our drive-through across from the hospital. YKHC offers testing without an appointment at the Bethel drive-through testing site Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from noon to 4 p.m. Testing also continues by appointment at the Bethel drive-through testing site on Monday and Friday, by calling 543-6949. We had a technical problem with the telephone line, but it is now working and all calls are returned within 24 hours.

Testing is available in our villages by calling the local clinic or when a rapid deployment team arrives.

The fastest way to receive your test result is by logging into MyYKHealth at www.ykhc.org. Results are uploaded to MyYKHealth at the exact same time your provider receives your test result.

We continue to experience long delays with testing results, currently averaging anywhere from five to eight days. We know that is long and frustrating and defeats the purpose of testing the longer it takes to receive a result.

Unfortunately, without any national coordination to improve testing, you can expect delays to continue and, indeed, worsen as disease burden increases in our region and state-wide.

YKHC recognized this early on and uses multiple tactics to receive results as fast as possible: 1) we maxed out our internal lab's capacity long ago; 2) we use the Alaska Native Medical Center's lab to the greatest extent possible; 3) we use the State of Alaska's lab to the greatest extent possible; and 4) we use a private lab to the greatest extent possible.

I also directed staff to purchase a new \$500,000 lab analyzer earlier this summer that can process our current volume and up to 1,000 samples in a 24 hour period. Unfortunately, due to the global pandemic, it will not be delivered and operational until March 2021 at the earliest and that assumes the manufacturer does not experience additional COVID-19 delays in its global supply chain and workforce.

PPE: We continue to ration different types of Personal Protective Equipment due to global and national shortages. We

see **TIME OUT**, page 8.

AVOID GATHERINGS DURING COVID-19

YKHC strongly urges the public to avoid hosting or attending gatherings of any kind during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

Because COVID-19 can be spread while an individual is asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic, individuals unaware they are infected with the highly contagious virus can spread it to others easily at gatherings—resulting in what is known as a “superspreader” event. Superspreader events are when a single person infects a large number of other people, or when a gathering is linked to a large number of cases.

Contact tracing of YK Delta cases indicates people recently exposed to or infected with COVID-19 have continued to participate in several types of gatherings, including but not limited to:

- Birthday parties
- Going away parties
- Community BINGO and pull-tabs
- Baby showers and gender reveal parties
- Throw parties
- Funerals
- Community meetings or gatherings
- Dining in and socializing at restaurants
- In-person religious services
- Small, indoor and outdoor social gatherings of two or more families/friends

To date, more than half of the communities in the YK Delta have been affected by COVID-19 and the numbers of infections continues to climb. Alaska and the YK Delta are experiencing record increases in the number of positive cases,

REMINDER FOR VILLAGE RESIDENTS ABOUT TRAVEL DURING PANDEMIC

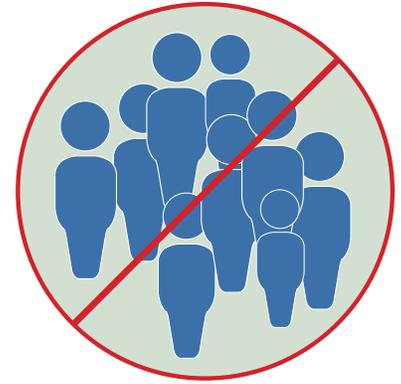
Although YKHC encourages YK Delta residents to avoid non-essential travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that village residents continue to keep necessary and essential medical appointments that might require travel to Bethel or Anchorage during this time.

Please remember:

Many communities have implemented testing and outside-village quarantine requirements before returning home.

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

- you are not positive for COVID-19
- you are awaiting test results prior or during travel



so social interactions and gatherings with anyone who does not reside in your same household during this time puts the public’s health at risk. Since COVID-19 is a novel virus, we offer a stark reminder that we cannot predict when someone will have a mild infection or a serious infection that may result in hospitalization or could lead to death.

Although difficult, we all must do our part each day to prevent the spread of COVID-19. YKHC again urges the public to strictly adhere to protective measures, including:

- Avoid hosting or attending gatherings with individuals outside your household.
- Maintain physical distance from anyone not in your household.
- Wear a mask in public.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Practice routine hand hygiene.

Your actions may save the life of a friend, family member, or neighbor during this uncertain time.

- your only risk factor has been out-of-village or out-of-region travel.

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.

YKHC has asked Tribes to take essential medical travel into consideration. *Please make arrangements with officials in your village to return home for safe quarantine BEFORE you leave for your appointments.*

BRINGING HEALTHCARE TO YOU: Providers take it to the village

In March of 2020, life in the YK Delta suddenly changed. The novel Coronavirus had found its way to Alaska. YKHC was faced with a new challenge: how can YKHC continue to provide care while keeping our staff, communities and our patients safe?

Thankfully, in true YKHC fashion, several departments were able to partner and continue YKHC's mission of "Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health."

One strategy identified to decrease the spread of this novel virus was for YKHC staff to travel to the villages to provide care. Each trip required extensive collaboration and coordination, including COVID-19 testing for staff prior to departure, approval from the Tribal Council for YKHC to visit their community, airport pick-ups upon arrival, and the tireless job of transporting all the gear required to provide care.

This model has been employed for many years, but in light of COVID-19 more staff and additional departments traveled to villages more frequently and to smaller communities that don't always see providers as often.

YKHC's Diabetes Prevention & Control was able to use grant funds earmarked for patient and provider travel to support this endeavor, which helped to offset costs from YKHC's Indian Health Service budget. As part of this partnership, more than 165 village trips have occurred, with Dental, Outpatient Services, the Village Itinerant Program, and Physical

Therapy each having completed more than 30 trips per department.

As part of this partnership, more than 38 of YKHC's villages have been able to host these providers. These departments were able to provide vital care for patients with diabetes—foot exams, dental exams, eye exams, medical check-ups—and were also able to offer routine medical care for all community residents.

Diabetes Prevention & Control would like to offer our gratitude to the departments that came together to offer all of this care. We would also like to take this opportunity to remind our community that November is American Diabetes Month. We encourage all adults older than 45 to be screened annually for diabetes and to have a proactive approach to preventing diabetes. Diabetes prevention can be thought of as three simple steps—plan healthy meals, be physically active, and find ways to lower stress.

Below are some pictures that have been shared, highlighting our providers' determination to provide care to the YK Delta.



Outpatient Clinic providers Anne Komulainen, PA-C, and Crystal Vancor in Napakiak.



Dr. Elizabeth Roll, Dr. Duane Jeffers, and Serry Vancor in Grayling.



Dr. Krystle Peñaflor and two Optometry interns head to Holy Cross.



Eliza Caguioa, Physical Therapist in Mountain Village.

HEALTHY LIVING

Diabetes Awareness Month

November is Diabetes Awareness Month when we raise awareness of the impact diabetes has on people's lives and the importance of eating healthy.

Did you know that traditional subsistence foods are often some of the healthiest foods you can eat?

Foods from the land help us meet our nutritional needs and the process of subsisting can be an excellent way to get exercise and relieve stress.

However, sometimes the ways in which we prepare foods can make them less healthy. One example is akutaq. Traditionally, akutaq was made using animal fat, but today it is most commonly made with Crisco and lots of sugar, which makes it much less healthy.

In honor of Diabetes Awareness Month, Diabetes Prevention & Control (DP&C) would love to hear what ideas and recipes you have for making healthier versions of akutaq!

Do you have a healthier version of akutaq that you are willing to share? If so, please submit your recipe to DP&C at diabetes_program@ykhc.org. Everyone who submits a healthy akutaq recipe will be eligible to receive a prize!

DP&C will share some of the healthiest recipe submissions over the next few months.



YKHC File Photo.



Family Support in Tobacco Cessation

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation and Mayo Clinic want to learn better ways to help Alaska Native people stop using tobacco.

To participate in this research study you must:

- be an Alaska Native person
- be 18 years or older

If you volunteer to join our research study, you will be asked to take a short survey, and then you will be asked for your feedback on each survey item.

This will last about 60 minutes.

You will receive a \$30 Visa gift card for your time.

If you are interested in learning more, please call Victoria Galanopoulos, YKHC Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Coordinator: **907-543-6244**

Recipe of the Month:

BERRY WATER



Ingredients

- 2 Cups berries
- 1 Quart water

Instructions

1. Add berries to water.
2. Serve as is or refrigerate

TIME OUT, from p. 4

maxed out our ordering of PPE with our vendors each and every day since February. Because of that aggressive ordering strategy we have been successful at keeping most stocks above critical shortage levels with the exception of gloves.

This will likely change with the large surge we are currently experiencing. However, we have been in contact with our federal and state unified command representatives and have received additional PPE and modified our ordering strategy to significantly increase our weekly shipments.

According to the Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association, health systems and nursing homes across the state and US have and are currently experiencing the same low levels of PPE.

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: Over the last year, YKHC has spent, or is about to incur expenses, of over \$10 million directly related to COVID-19 preparedness and response. This includes about \$3 million on staffing; over \$500,000 on various supplies; over \$500,000 on computer equipment, software and internet services; over \$7 million on numerous capital projects in Bethel and village clinics across the entire region; and millions in donated PPE from various federal, state and tribal agencies.

Earlier this fall we began hiring additional clinical and administrative staff to increase our testing capabilities and improve our medical response in anticipation of the COVID-19 surge we are now experiencing and possible future surges.

TAKE CONTROL!

EVERYONE: We all have the ability to intervene and slow the spread. Changing our behavior is difficult, but each of us can follow the COVID-19 precautions mentioned above and do so as a community and a region.

Get prepared by ensuring you have enough food for a couple weeks in case you or your family need to quarantine. Develop a routine and remember to exercise when you can. A pandemic can be a stressful time. YKHC has resources available to you and your family if you would like to speak with someone. Call 907-543-6272.

Pay attention to our website, www.ykhc.org, its COVID-19 dashboard and our Facebook page for the latest COVID-19 information.

Trust that we will continue to communicate accurate and timely information so you can take precautions. And remember to get your flu vaccination.

YKHC is here for you and your family.

Sincerely,



Your flu shot protects me, my flu shot protects you.

YKHC urges all residents of the YK Delta to receive their flu shot in the 2020/2021 season.

COVID-19 and the seasonal flu have very similar symptoms. Simultaneous COVID-19 and flu outbreaks in our communities this winter could easily overwhelm local medical capacity. You can help prevent this from happening, while protecting the health of yourself and others, by receiving your flu vaccine.



Flu vaccine has been distributed to all village clinics and will be available by appointment at village clinics after October 3.

November 2020

DR. PAUL JOHN CALRICARAQ PROJECT



Guiding Principles: Represent the Y-K region's Culture & Identity | Promote Customer Centered Care | Affordable Cost & Sustainable Operations

PJCP CONSTRUCTION

Construction continues on the elevated and covered pedestrian walkway from the parking lot to the east employee entrance. Contractors are driving additional steel piles and erecting structural steel for the walkway.

The Connector/Gathering House is being used for access from the clinic's main entrance to the Emergency Department, Diagnostic Imaging and the Cafeteria, and was scheduled for HVAC commissioning in October.

HOSPITAL RENOVATION

In the surgery and central sterile remodel areas, most of the wall and floor finishes are complete. Through mid-October, door and hardware installation continued along with the nurse station casework. Operating room lighting, anesthesia equipment support booms, and central sterilization equipment were installed in early October.

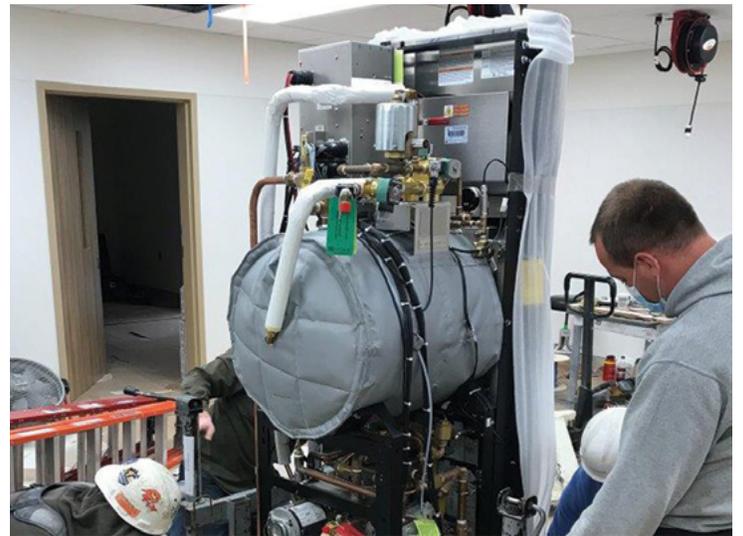
Substantial completion inspections, corrective work, and equipment/systems commissioning occurred in October, with the turnover of this space to YKHC for move-in scheduled November 1.

Remodel of the new hospital south entry continued through September with completion of the roof and fireproofing of the roof and floor decks and structural steel. Exterior insulated siding panels and electrical, plumbing and mechanical rough-in continued into October. Exterior glass installation was scheduled for late October. The new entry will include an interior ramp for access to Security, the Emergency Department Fast Track, Diagnostic Imaging, Medical Records, and Preventive Care departments.

With the exception of Diagnostic Imaging, these areas are still in the renovation phase. Drywall installation, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical are completing the in-wall work, and work continues in the above-ceiling spaces.



The new hospital south entry.



Setting up new sterilizer equipment.

Sprinkler, HVAC, and electrical fixtures will be installed after the start of the ceiling grid in late October. The Emergency Department waiting area remains partially open, awaiting their added space with the completion of the Fast Track area. The new hospital parking lot was completed in late September.

Arctic pipe and new fire hydrants are being installed. Wood boardwalks around the south and east sides of the hospital were being completing in October.



Paving the new south parking lot.

Contractors demolished the old pharmacy and started renovations in October. This area is designed for new locker rooms and restrooms, a staff lounge, conference room, training room, and workshop for medical equipment maintenance and repair. YKHC will remove the old equipment from the new main server room adjacent to the old pharmacy. Existing fiber optic lines were relocated and the space was cleared for the arrival of new equipment.

The existing rooftop penthouse air handler unit (above the old clinic) was scheduled for demolition in late October. The new air handler for the same area and emergency department has been commissioned and is operating. YKHC will begin vacating the maintenance garage as the existing electrical gear and old generators are disengaged in preparation for removal in early November.

CHAP NEWS

Community Health
Aide Program

JULY 2020 HEALTH AIDES OF THE MONTH: Nunapitchuk Clinic Staff

July is our subsistence and gathering month. Many people travel by boat during the summer to get to where they need to go. Accidents can happen on the river just like they could in the village or in the city.

Health aides are rarely called to respond outside of the village and they occasionally do not have a boat of their own to respond. We are always thankful that our communities work together to care for each other. Without support of the community many of our Health Aides would not succeed in their profession. Recently our health aides were able to stabilize patients that were in a boating accident near the village. They worked closely with the communities' support to reach the patients that were in need of help.

Our health aides used their ETT/EMT skills to stabilize patients and transport them to the clinic. They worked tirelessly and worked well as a team under pressure. They saved three lives that day! Thank you all for your amazing effort and work. Thank you to the community for helping when you did.



Choppy water at Nunapitchuk (YKHC file photo).

CHAP THANKS SCAMMON BAY FOR SUPPORTING HEALTH AIDES

We choose where we live, we respect where we live, and continue living the way our ancestors did. We live off the land, the land takes care of us. We live miles away from the hospital and live miles away from surgeons who do their magic in treating their patients.

When emergencies happen, our first responders, the Health Aides, do what they can to stabilize patients until they are picked up by Lifemed. Depending on the severity of their condition, patients are then transferred to Bethel, Anchorage, or Seattle.

Recently, they saved another patient's life. We are very fortunate to have Health Aides who do everything possible to keep their patients stable. CHAP would like to thank our staff in Scammon Bay and the community for supporting their Health Aides. Thank you all for amazing team work!



Scammon Bay (YKHC file photo).

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH FACILITY VISITATION POLICY

Due to the current COVID-19 community spread, YKHC is restricting **all** visitation to our Primary Care Facility, Hospital, Emergency Department, and other Bethel facilities, including the Community Health Services Building (CHSB).

Everyone entering our facilities in Bethel are required to answer health screening questions and have their temperature taken with a “forehead” thermometer. Patients coming to the facility to be seen will be given a mask, if they are not wearing one, will be instructed on utilization of the mask if not wearing it correctly, and instructed to socially distance at all times. The mask must cover the mouth **AND NOSE** at all times.

Patients will be required to use hand sanitizer or wash their hands upon entry past the screening station. Any individual **screening** positive for COVID-19 will not be allowed entrance unless presenting for currently needed care for COVID-19 related symptoms. If not presenting for care they will be advised to obtain COVID-19 testing

Free COVID-19 testing is available most week days in Bethel at our drive-through across from the hospital. YKHC offers testing without an appointment at the Bethel drive-through testing site Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from noon to 4 p.m. Testing also continues by appointment at the Bethel drive-through testing site on Monday and Friday, by calling 543-6949.

Patient Escorts

Currently we are not allowing any “extra people” into the hospital. This includes individuals who are coming to appointments with their pregnant partners or additional children who are not being seen. Only one parent per child/children’s appointment will be allowed.

No escorts with fever/cough/cold or other COVID-19 symptoms will be allowed entry. Only escorts essential for helping provide patient care and or caring for pediatric patients should be allowed into the facility.

- Only escorts over age 18 are allowed unless they are the parent of a minor they are escorting.
- No pregnant or immunocompromised escorts will be al-

lowed unless the parent of a minor child that is being escorted.

- Escorts, depending on the ability of the patient and the location of the patient’s appointment, may have to wait outside of the main waiting area.
- There will be no escorts allowed in the Emergency Department.
- They may wait in the waiting area outside of the screening area.
- Exceptions can be made if the patient is terminal, with permission of the Chief of Staff or the Infection Prevention MD.

Hand washing/hand sanitizer utilization along with mask use and social distancing at all times while within Bethel YKHC facilities is required. Escorts who do not comply will be required to leave the facility.

For our hospitalized patients who require escorts:

- One escort will be allowed who will stay with the patient during the entire period of hospitalization and will be restricted to staying in the room with the patient.
- One labor support person who will stay with the patient during the entire period of hospitalization and will be restricted to staying in the room with the patient.
- Food and hydration can be obtained by turning the call light on and making arrangements with the unit staff.

Employees:

Employees are only allowed in the facilities for scheduled or work-related business. If they are not there for a scheduled shift or their visit is not work related they will be considered a visitor, patient, or escort, depending on the reason for being present, and treated as such. Any food delivery will need to be picked up by the employee at the front entrance before the screening station.

If you have symptoms like a cough, fever or shortness of breath and think you have the COVID-19 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.



Dear Tribal & City Leadership and the Public:

**RE: PUBLIC ALERT: URGENT ACTION NEEDED NOW TO FOLLOW
ALL COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS TO FLATTEN THE CURVE.**

On October 26, 2020, Dr. Tom Hennessy of the University of Alaska Anchorage sent the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) a report that modeled the COVID-19 epidemic and its health care capacity demand for the region and our ancillary partners. See attached Report. Dr. Hennessy used the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention’s (CDC) COVID-19 Surge model to estimate demand for hospital services during the pandemic.

The tool was used to estimate future COVID-19 cases in the Bethel and Kusivak Census areas and hospital capacity at the Yukon Delta Regional Hospital (YKDRH). Dr. Hennessy found that using data through October 25, “the predicted time until COVID-19 cases exceed the YKDRH adult inpatient bed capacity is approximately 3 weeks (24 days), assuming current conditions [] and 19 days in the worst case scenario” Dr. Hennessy concluded:

At the current rate of transmission, the YKDRH adult inpatient capacity is likely to be exceeded within the next month. Containing and reducing the spread of the epidemic is urgently needed. Contingency plans for care of COVID-19 patients in excess of current hospital capacity should be enacted.

However, he also found that, “A 25% reduction of transmission [] would reduce the maximum number of beds to 20 and extend that peak into mid-January.” This is called and often referred to by experts as “flatten the curve.”

As I have reported since March, YKHC asks that each of us change our personal behaviors. We must hunker down and stop visiting people outside of our households. We also ask that everyone follow the COVID-19 precautions as outlined on our website, www.ykhc.org and Facebook page to flatten the curve. Additionally, in March YKHC activated its Incident Command management structure and devised a surge plan with 45 new inpatient beds and 8 additional beds for higher acuity patients. This is above and beyond our existing 26 bed capacity. Prevention by following all known COVID-19 precautions will keep YKHC from having to enact our surge plan.

It is not time to panic, but time to take control! Knowledge is power. Knowledge plus implementing behavior changes can and will break the cycle of transmission in our region. Visit our website and Facebook page for all COVID-19 precautions and please follow them in order to reduce the spread. You can save someone from unnecessarily suffering and also save a life.

Sincerely,
YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORP.

**Dan Winkelman
President & CEO**

- Akiak
- Akiakchak
- Alakanuk
- Andreafsky
- Aniak
- Anvik
- Atnauthiak
- Bethel
- Billmoore’s Slough
- Chefornak
- Chevak
- Chuathbaluk
- Chulconawick
- Crooked Creek
- Eek
- Emmonak
- Georgetown
- Grayling
- Hamilton
- Holy Cross
- Ho per Bay
- Kasigluk
- Kipruk
- Kongiganak
- Kotlik
- Kwethluk
- Kwigillingok
- Lime Village
- Lower Kalskag
- Marshall
- Mekoryuk
- Mountain Village
- Napaimute
- Napakiak
- Napaskiak
- Newtok
- Nightmute
- Nunam Iqua
- Nunapitchuk
- hoqomiut
- Oscarville
- Paimute
- Pilot Station
- Fitka’s Point
- Quinhagak
- Red Devil
- Russian Mission
- Scammon Bay
- Shageluk
- Sleetmute
- St. Mary’s
- Stony River
- Toksook Bay
- Tuluksak
- Tuntutuliak
- Tununak
- Umkumiut
- Upper Kalskag

Model of the COVID-19 Epidemic and Health Care Capacity Demand, Bethel, Alaska

October 26, 2020

Tom Hennessy, MD, MPH

The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate changes in the COVID-19 epidemic in the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Region and to update models that evaluated the predicted demand on the hospital healthcare system.

Methods: The CDC COVID-19Surge¹ is a spreadsheet based modeling tool that allows public health and hospital officials to estimate demand for hospital services during the pandemic. We have used the tool to model the epidemic using publicly available case counts, hospital capacity and the effective reproductive number (Rt). The reproductive number estimates how many persons each COVID-19 case will infect, on average.

The tool predicts future case counts, hospitalizations, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) use and ventilator need based on the current conditions. We applied this tool to estimate future COVID-19 cases in the Bethel and Kusilvak Census areas and hospital capacity at the YK Delta Regional Hospital in Bethel.

Main Findings.

Using data through October 25, the predicted time until COVID-19 cases exceed the YKDRH adult inpatient bed capacity is approximately 3 weeks (24 days), assuming current conditions (Rt 1.6, 24 adult inpatient beds available) and 19 days in the worst case scenario I evaluated (Rt 2.0).

The model predicts that when hospital capacity is exceeded, 8 of the patients will need ICU care and 4 will need mechanical ventilation. If all patients needing ICU care are transferred to other facilities, adult inpatients are predicted to exceed YKDRH capacity approximately one week later.

A 25% reduction of transmission (to Rt 1.2) would reduce the maximum number of beds to 20 and extend that peak into mid-January. **See details, below.**

Limitations.

These models are used to illustrate what could happen under certain conditions and are not intended to precisely predict future events. This model makes simplifying assumptions that limit the precision of the estimated date when hospital capacity is exceeded. These include assuming that the entire YKHC population is mixing equally, that no other changes in hospital bed availability occurs during this time, and that the proportion of COVID-19 cases that require hospitalization is similar to Statewide averages.

So, these predicted dates when YKDRH beds are full of COVID-19 patients are likely to be imprecise, but these models do predict at the current rate of transmission, the hospital capacity will be exceeded relatively soon.

Conclusions

At the current rate of transmission, the YKDRH adult inpatient capacity is likely to be exceeded within the next month. Containing and reducing the spread of the epidemic is urgently needed. Contingency plans for care of COVID-19 patients in excess of current hospital capacity should be enacted.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/COVIDSurge.html>

Model results of predicted adult inpatient beds needed for COVID-19 cases, based on data through October 26, 2020 **YK Delta cases only**

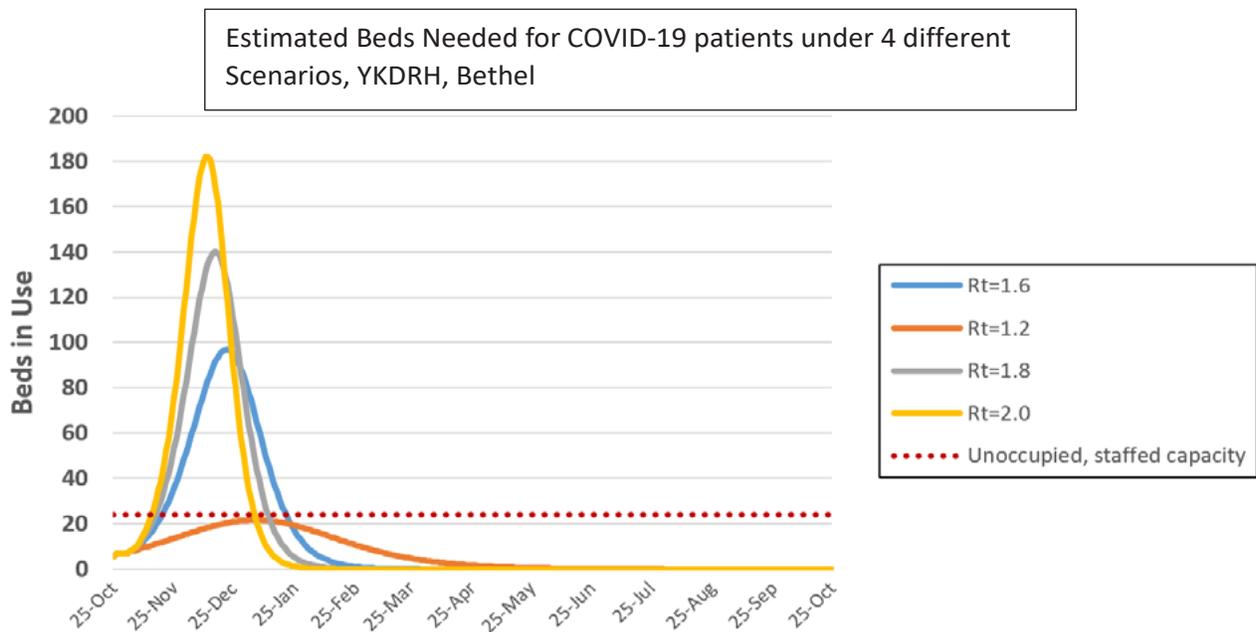
Assumptions and inputs:

-Proportion of COVID-19 cases hospitalized: 4%, source SOA public data

Effective reproductive number (Rt): current estimate 1.6, varied from 1.2 to 2.0, source SOA COVID website

The model includes total case needing hospitalization and does account for hospital usage of COVID-19 cases that might require care in Anchorage hospitals.

Dotted red line shows the 24 currently available adult beds at YKDRH.



Projected Date that Adult Bed capacity will be exceeded with a range of Reproductive Number estimates

Reproductive Number estimate	Date ICU beds exceeded
1.2	Not exceeded
1.6, current estimate	November 19
1.8	November 16
2.0	November 14

Predicted Daily Case Counts for the YK Delta Region under 4 different scenarios

Assumptions: Testing continues to be widely available

Transmission continues at the current rates

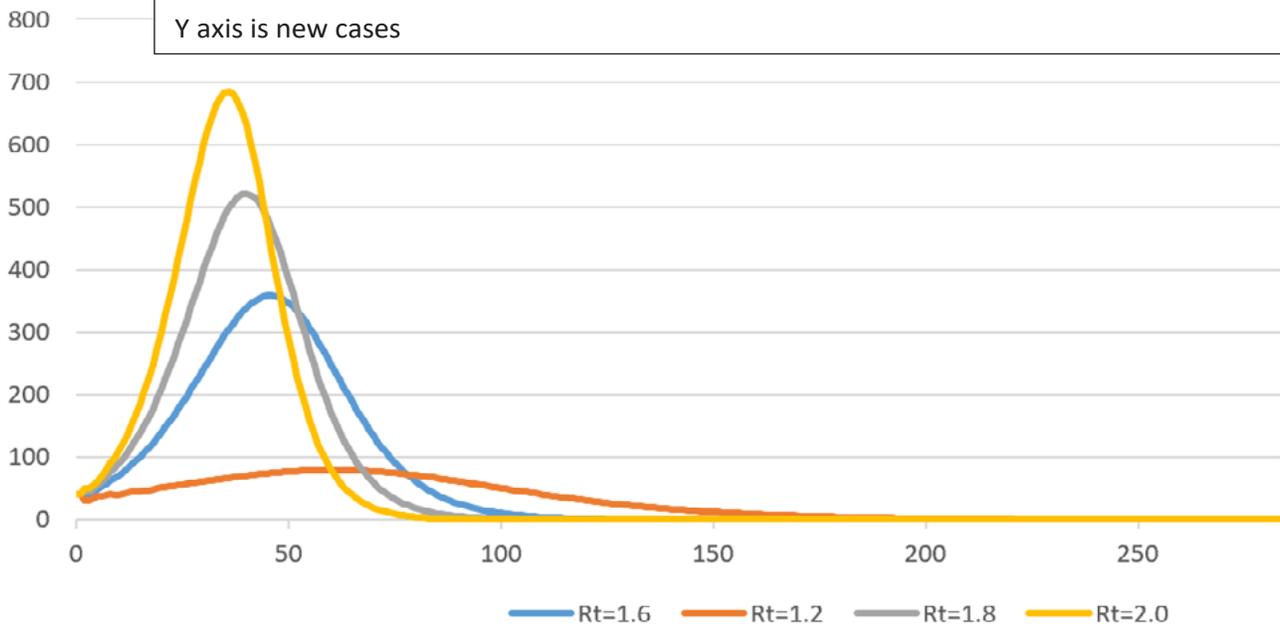
Equal mixing of the population

Conclusions: This graphic is shown for illustration purposes only to show how exponential growth could occur in this region . The actual regional epidemic is likely to be different.

New COVID-19 Cases by Day, YK Delta Region. Under 4 Scenarios of Transmission, Rt 1.2, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0.

X axis is days after October 26, 2020

Y axis is new cases



WHO'S COMING TO A CLINIC NEAR YOU?

The following providers will be bringing healthcare services closer to your home in the coming months. To schedule an appointment time, contact your village health clinic.

Dates are subject to change dependent on weather or other scheduling issues.

November

Dental

Upper Kalskag: Conan Murat, DHAT & Katherine Levi + 2 DA..... 11/2-6
Hooper Bay: Dr. Burks, Wilma Uisok, DHAT, Gwendolyn Owletuck, DHAT and 2 DAs..... 11/2-6
Pilot Station: Sean Davis..... 11/6-13
Russian Mission: Tamija Woods, DHAT 11/16-19
Alakanuk: Bonnie Hunt, DHAT + DA 11/16-20

Family Medicine

Sleetmute: Blake Shahlaie, PA-C..... 9/21-11/3
Crooked Creek: Laura Koskenmaki, FNP 10/29-11/17
Chuathbaluk: Andrea Goryl, FNP 10/27-11/5
Chevak: Linda Hewett, FNP 11/3-5
Nightmute: L. Kat Spann, FNP 11/6-14
Sleetmute: Blake Shahlaie, PA-C..... 10/22-11/8
Chuathbaluk: William Ford, FNP 10/30-11/21
Anvik: Matthew Horgan, FNP..... 11/2-10
St. Mary's SRC: Dr. Lisa Rotelli (peds) 11/2-6
Russian Mission: Rachael Youngblood, FNP & CHAP 11/2-5
Kotlik: Farah Sears, FNP 11/7-24
Lower Kalskag: Andrea Goryl, FNP 11/9-20
Anvik: Blake Shahlaie, PA-C..... 11/16-30
Emmonak SRC: Drs. Lye-Ching Wong (peds) and Zoe Storck (peds resident) 11/16-20
Hooper Bay SRC: Dr. Justin Willis (peds) 11/16-20
Marshall: Anne Komulainen, PA-C, and Dr. Chandler Villaverde with two nurses 11/16-20
Sleetmute: Colleen Britt, FNP & CHAP 11/16-18
Crooked Creek: L. Kat Spann, FNP 11/20-24
Stony River: Colleen Britt, FNP & CHAP 11/19-20
Nightmute: Laura Koskenmaki, FNP 11/25-12/14
Sleetmute: William Ford, FNP 11/27-12/16
Nightmute: Laura Koskenmaki, FNP 11/25-12/14
Chuathbaluk: Andrea Goryl, FNP 11/29-12/15
Crooked Creek: Matthew Horgan, FNP 11/29-12/8
Chefornak: Joan Daniels, FNP, with nurse 11/30-12/4
Kongiganak: Dr. Judy w/ nurse 11/30-12/4

Physical Therapy

Kotlik: Eliza Caguioa, PT 11/2-3
St Mary's: Eliza Caguioa, PT 11/16-18
Mountain Village: Eliza Caguioa, PT 11/19-20

Optometry

Kwigillingok: Optometry Dr. Conrad +2 11/2-5
Stony River: Dr. Kalistook +2 11/9-11
Nunam Iqua: Dr Lucatero +2..... 11/16-19

Public Health Nursing

Napaskiak: Micheline Tchatchoua & Susi Peterson (2 RN) 11/17-20
Kipnuk: Susi Peterson (1 RN) 11/30-12/3
Upper/Lower Kalskag: Tamija Woods, DHAT 11/30-12/3

December

Dental

Nunam Iqua: Bonnie Hunt, DHAT +DA..... 12/7-10
Chevak: Janette Ulak, DHAT + DA..... 12/14-18
Grayling: Tamija Woods, DHAT 12/14-17

Family Medicine

Russian Mission: Rachael Youngblood, FNP & CHAP 12/7-10
Anvik: Farah Sears, FNP 12/7-15
Chevak: Sandy Beeman, PA-C; Erin Abston, PA-C; Krystal Gransbury NA 12/8-10
Chuathbaluk: Blake Shahlaie, PA-C..... 12/15-19
Crooked Creek: Matthew Horgan, FNP 12/14-22
Chuathbaluk: Farah Sears, FNP 12/21-29
Chuathbaluk: William Ford..... 12/26-1/14
Anvik: L. Kat Robbins-Spann, FNP 12/26-1/2
Sleetmute: Matthew Horgan, FNP 12/28-1/5

Public Health Nursing

Chevak: Susi Peterson / Micheline Tchatchoua (2 RN's)- 12/14-17

January

Family Medicine

Anvik: Andrea Goryl, FNP 1/3-21
Nightmute: Farah Sears, FNP 1/4-12
Sleetmute: Blake Shahlaie, PA-C..... 1/9-23
Chuathbaluk: Laura Kowkenmaki, FNP 1/21-2/11
Sleetmute: Matthew Horgan, FNP 1/25-2/2

Public Health Nursing

St. Mary's: Micheline Tchatchoua (1 RN)-PHN 1/4-7
Quinhagak: Susi Peterson (1 RN) Assessment-PHN 1/11-14
Eek: Micheline Tchatchoua (1 RN)-PHN 1/25-28