



# Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

## NEWS RELEASE # 045

For immediate release: 11/19/2020, 9:00 p.m.

**Valdez, AK** – The community of Valdez received confirmation of three new resident cases of COVID-19 on Thursday.

Two of the new resident cases are adults with symptoms. The third new resident case is an asymptomatic adult. All three patients are in isolation and following the guidance of their medical providers and public health officials.

The contact investigation for all three cases is complete. Close contacts of all three patients have been notified and are in quarantine. Preliminary source investigation indicates the asymptomatic patient and one of the symptomatic patients are linked to each other and another recently announced Valdez case. The source investigation for the other symptomatic patient remains ongoing. None of the three new cases appear to be linked to the recent possible exposures within the local K-12 school system.

Additionally, one Valdez resident case is now considered recovered. The term “recovered” in this context means the patient has been released from public health isolation monitoring and is no longer considered contagious. Please note, even following release from isolation, the patient may continue to experience after effects of the disease.

As of Thursday, there are over 184 people in quarantine in Valdez. The majority are close contacts of recent cases within the local K-12 school system. To help identify who else might be at risk, the Valdez Unified Command partnered with the Valdez School District and local medical community on Thursday to hold a voluntary mass sample collection event. Approximately 160 total people provided samples for testing during the drive thru event. This included 130 students and school district staff in their second week of quarantine along with their immediate household members. Approximately 30 additional people unrelated to the school district also participated. Samples collected during the event will be sent to the state lab for processing, as state lab testing is more sensitive than locally available rapid testing and therefore more appropriate for asymptomatic close contacts in quarantine. The local medical community reports the state lab currently has a three to five day turnaround on test results.

Public health officials continue to believe community spread is occurring in Valdez, with most identifiable transmissions occurring between family, friends, and co-workers. Small social events, such as group dinners, house parties, playdates, and other gatherings where people let their guard down, continue to be a specific area of concern. While the virus is more likely to spread indoors, outdoor gatherings also still pose a significant risk.

We must work together to help protect our community, our medical workers, and our healthcare system. Please remain extra cautious and make thoughtful decisions as you go about your day. Please wear a mask which covers your mouth AND nose when you are around anyone outside your household, even if you are outdoors or can maintain six feet of distance. Keep your social circles small and consistent. Try to limit your time around those outside your household to only that which is necessary. Look for creative ways to minimize risk as you plan your holidays. Prevent additional strain on our local medical community by avoiding high risk activities which could result in injury. If you think you’ve been exposed to COVID-19, reach out to the Valdez Public Health Nurse (835-4612) or your medical provider for guidance on next steps. Stay home and arrange to get tested if you have even one mild symptom of COVID-19.

The Valdez Unified Command and public health officials continue to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation. We remain committed to providing information, support, and resources for our community.

VALDEZ COVID-19 CASE COUNT					
Last updated 11.19.2020 @ 9:00 p.m.					
	CUMULATIVE CASES TO DATE	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED CASES	CUMULATIVE HOSPITALIZATIONS	DEATHS
VALDEZ RESIDENT	45	12	32	2*	1
NON-RESIDENT (NON-ALASKANS)	30	0	30	1*	0

\*Valdez case hospitalized in ANC.

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