



Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

NEWS RELEASE # 059 Valdez Weekly Summary

For immediate release: 01/15/2021, 8:00 p.m.

Valdez, AK – Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command provides the following local weekly summary covering developments over the last seven days.

Valdez Case Count Updates & Trends

Since the time of our last weekly summary on Jan. 8, the community of Valdez received notification of four new resident cases and one recovered non-resident case of COVID-19. As of midnight on Jan. 14, Valdez has four active resident cases and zero active non-resident cases.

Of the four new resident cases, two are asymptomatic adults, one is an adult with symptoms, and the fourth is a minor with symptoms. Source for one case is linked to travel within Alaska. One is a close contact of another active case. The transmission source for the remaining two cases remain under investigation.

The new non-resident case tested positive upon arrival in Alaska. However, public health officials confirmed they experienced symptoms and completed their isolation period while out of state. While they are included in the non-resident case count, they are no longer considered contagious and automatically placed into the “recovered” category.

Public health officials believe additional positive cases in the community are likely. Most recent identifiable transmissions appear to be either between family and friends or due to travel. Please continue to work together to protect our community and our healthcare system. Continue to keep your social circle small and consistent. Try to limit your time traveling outside Valdez to only that which is necessary. Continue to wear a mask which covers your mouth and nose when you are around anyone outside of your household, even if you are outdoors or can maintain six feet of physical distance.

Remember to stay home if you are sick and arrange for COVID-19 testing, even if you have only one mild symptom. Testing promptly and working cooperatively with public health contact tracers helps ensure others at risk are quickly identified to prevent further spread.

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

COVID-19 vaccines authorized for emergency use by the FDA are highly effective for the protection of the patient and prevention of severe illness. However, it remains unknown whether vaccinated individuals can carry the virus to others. Those vaccinated must continue to take precautions to protect those around them, including physical distancing, wearing a mask, and practicing good hygiene. As of now, vaccinated individuals must still follow State of Alaska requirements for testing and quarantine due to travel. To learn more about those requirements, visit: <http://covid19.alaska.gov/health-order>.

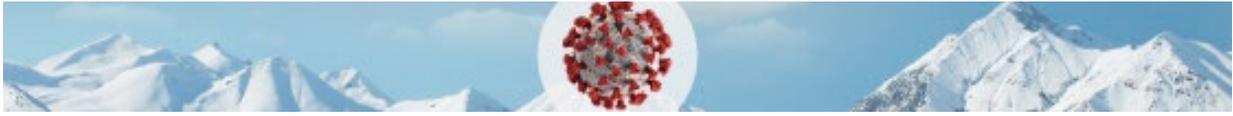
COVID-19 vaccine is allocated in Valdez based upon state and federal guidelines. Local officials do not make allocation decisions. Valdez Unified Command’s Vaccine Task Force, comprised of members of the local medical community, public health, city staff, Valdez Native Tribe representatives, and others, work together to determine logistics for vaccine distribution based upon state/federal allocation guidelines.

The following people are currently eligible for vaccine in Valdez under state guidelines:

- **Phase 1A – Tiers 1, 2, & 3:** Healthcare/medical workers and long term care residents.
- **Phase 1B – Tier 1:** Alaskan elders age 65 and older.

No additional information is available regarding the timeline for vaccine distribution for future tiers of Phase 1B. No sign-up or future vaccine reservation option is available for anyone except those currently eligible.

The Valdez vaccine distribution process used for eligible groups consists of several closed point of dispensing (POD) clinics. Appointments are required for COVID-19 closed PODs to verify eligibility, ensure equity of distribution, and provide time for the standard 15 to 30 minute post-vaccination observation period.



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Two Valdez options exist to make appointments for those eligible under Phase 1A and Phase 1B – Tier 1:

- **Preferred Option:** Make a vaccination appointment online: <http://covidvax.alaska.gov>. **Please note, the Valdez online scheduling button will only be shown when appointment slots are available. Check back often as new appointment options will be added regularly.**
- **Alternate Options:** If you do not have internet access or need help with scheduling online, you can also make a vaccination appointment by calling the DHSS Valdez Public Health Clinic at 907.835.4612.

Please note, Alaska's distribution process and specific phases/tiers do not include military service members or Valdez Native Tribe members. They will be vaccinated through a direct federal or Indian Health Service allocation. Timing of eligibility under these types of allocations may differ from timing of eligibility under the state's phases/tiers. Valdez Native Tribe members should call the VNT office at 907.835.4951 for assistance scheduling vaccine appointments.

As of Jan. 15, the following cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccinations have been administered in Valdez.

- **Pfizer-BioNTech:** 144 first doses and 77 second doses.
- **Moderna:** 210 first doses.

(The numbers above include those vaccinated under both the Indian Health Service allocation administered by Valdez public health nursing and Phase 1A or Phase 1B-Tier 1 of the State of Alaska allocation. The numbers above do not include members of the military or others vaccinated under a federal allocation.)

To view the weekly local vaccine dashboard and additional information on Valdez vaccine distribution, visit <http://www.valdezak.gov/595/Valdez-COVID-19-Vaccine-Updates>

Those interested in volunteering for upcoming vaccine distribution POD clinics should contact the Valdez Unified Command volunteer coordinator, Rhea Cragun, at 907.843.3416 or rcragun@valdezak.gov. All skill levels are welcome, including people to help with patient registration, clinic logistics, and vaccine administration.

Valdez Testing Options

If you think you may have been exposed to the virus which causes COVID-19, please reach out to the Valdez Public Health Nurse (835-4612) or your medical provider for guidance on next steps.

Multiple options exist for both symptomatic and asymptomatic testing in Valdez. All local testing options are by appointment only and at no out-of-pocket cost to the patient. Please visit the Valdez Unified Command website to learn more: <http://www.valdezak.gov/COVID-19>. Please note, Providence Valdez Medical Center's regularly scheduled Monday testing event will shift to Tuesday next week due to the holiday.

Valdez Economic Relief & Recovery

In addition to mitigating the health impacts of COVID-19 in Valdez, our community has been working diligently to address the economic impacts from the pandemic felt by residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

The City of Valdez continues to accept applications for the **Valdez COVID-19 Business Economic Recovery Grant Program**. This initiative provides financial recovery assistance to Valdez businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19. Businesses with active Valdez and state business registrations in 2020 and 2021, as well as certain commercial fishing operators, are eligible for the program. Grant award amounts are determined by established program criteria, up to \$10,000 per business. Grant applications are available on the city website or at City Hall and due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Feb. 12.

To learn more about the City Economic Relief & Recovery Initiative and download applications for the current Valdez Economic Recovery programs, visit: <http://www.valdezak.gov/557/Valdez-COVID-19-Economic-Relief-Recovery>.

More Information

For the most up-to-date local information, please continue to monitor the Valdez Unified Command website (www.valdezak.gov/COVID-19) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ValdezUCRG).

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