

Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

NEWS RELEASE # 060 Valdez Weekly Summary

For immediate release: 01/22/2021, 7:00 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. 15, the community of Valdez received notification of three new resident cases of COVID-19. As of midnight on Jan. 21, Valdez has four active resident cases and zero active non-resident cases.

Of the three new resident cases, two are adults with symptoms and one is a minor with symptoms. Transmission source for two of the cases appears linked to travel within Alaska. The third is a close contact of another active case.

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 and transmit it 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 under state guidelines and can actively schedule appointments.

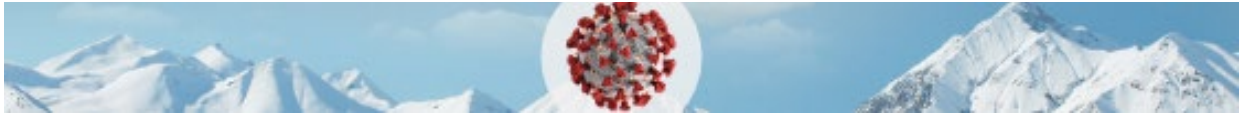
- **OPEN NOW: Phase 1A – All Tiers:** Healthcare/medical workers and long term care residents.
- **OPEN NOW: Phase 1B – Tier 1:** Individuals age 65 and older.

The following people will be eligible soon for vaccine under state guidelines.

- **COMING SOON: Phase 1B – Tier 2:**
 - Frontline essential workers who are aged 50 years and older and whose work related duties must be performed on-site and involve being in close proximity (less than six feet) to the public or co-workers.

"Frontline essential workers" under this tier are specifically defined as those who work in childcare and education, first responders and public safety personnel, food and agriculture workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and U.S Postal Service workers. *(Other categories of workers fall in this Tier for rural communities off the road system, which does not apply for the Valdez area.)*
 - People living or working in other congregate settings not covered in Phase 1A.

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 currently eligible:

- **Preferred Appointment 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 Appointment Option:** 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.

No additional information is available regarding how much vaccine Valdez will be allocated in future months or 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.

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. 22, the following cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccinations have been administered in Valdez under both IHS and state allocations (*these number do not include those vaccinated under a federal allocation*):

- **Pfizer-BioNTech:** 156 first doses and 95 second doses.
- **Moderna:** 340 first doses.

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 rccragun@valdezak.gov. All skill levels are welcome.

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 Clinic 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>.

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 following economic recovery programs:

- **Valdez Advertising & Marketing Grant Program:** Provides a matching grant up to \$5,000 to assist local tourism-related small businesses market their company and our community to visitors. Grant criteria and applications are available on the city website or at City Hall and due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Feb. 12 (*extended deadline*).
- **Valdez COVID-19 Business Economic Recovery Grant Program:** Provides financial recovery assistance to Valdez businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19, up to \$10,000 per business. Grant criteria and 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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