

Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

NEWS RELEASE # 065 Valdez Weekly Summary

For immediate release: 02/26/2021, 3:00 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 Feb. 19, the community of Valdez received notification of one new resident case and zero new non-resident cases of COVID-19. As of midnight on Feb. 25, Valdez has one active resident case and zero active non-resident cases.

The new active resident case is an adult with symptoms. Preliminary source investigation indicates this case is likely linked to recent travel and attendance at a social gathering outside Valdez.

Please Continue to Work Together to Protect Our Community & 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.
- **Remember to stay home if you are sick.**
- If you have even one mild symptom or think you've been exposed to the virus which causes COVID-19, arrange to be tested at one of the multiple testing locations in Valdez. Testing promptly and working cooperatively with public health contact tracers helps ensure others at risk are quickly identified to prevent further spread.
- Consider getting vaccinated once it is your turn.

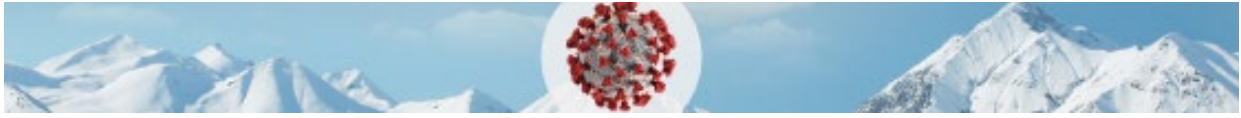
COVID-19 Vaccine Update

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.

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:

- **OPEN: Phase 1A – All Tiers:** Healthcare/medical workers and long term care residents. **This tier now includes people who stay home to provide care and daily support - such as assistance with bathing, dressing, eating, shopping, and housework - for medically fragile individuals or seniors.**
- **OPEN: Phase 1B – Tier 1:** Individuals age 65 and older. **People who assist seniors in getting a vaccine are also now eligible to receive vaccination at the same time. Both the senior and the person helping must schedule their appointments at the same time. The person assisting does not need to meet other eligibility requirements to receive vaccination.**
- **OPEN: Phase 1B – Tier 2:**
 - People age 50 years & older who have a high risk medical condition.
 - People age 50 years & older who are frontline essential workers and required to work within six feet of others.
 - People living or working in congregate settings not covered in Phase 1A.
 - Education staff, limited to PreK-12 educators & support staff, childcare workers & support staff, and indigenous language & cultural bearers.
 - Limited pandemic response staff who may come into contact with the SARS-CoV-2 virus during outbreak response activities.



Valdez COVID-19 Unified Command

Appointments for the first local vaccine POD clinic in March are full. Additional local March vaccine appointments will be added as Valdez receives additional vaccine allocation from the state. Please check back regularly for appointment options.

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. Those eligible should check back often if you are not able to make an appointment right away. Additional appointments will be added as Valdez is allocated more vaccine supply from the state.
- **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 Center at 907.835.4612.

As of Feb. 26, the following cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccinations have been administered in Valdez: *These numbers include state and IHS allocations, as well as federal allocations administered thru the Valdez public health clinic.*

- **Pfizer-BioNTech:** 186 first doses and 182 second doses.
- **Moderna:** 570 first doses and 495 second doses.
- **Total Administered:** 756 first doses and 677 second 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 rcragun@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 or have even one mild symptom, 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. 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>.

COVID Conscious Business Program

The COVID Conscious Business Program recognizes local businesses and organizations for following recommended COVID-19 safety practices to protect their workforce, their customers/clients/guests, and our community. Program applicants must earn a minimum of 85 points from a list of COVID-19 education, planning, and prevention efforts to earn the certification. **As of Feb. 26, a total of 58 local businesses have received program certification.**

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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