



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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UNIFIED COMMAND ANNOUNCES FIRST WRANGELL POSITIVE

WRANGELL, June 7, 2020 – On Sunday, June 7, members of the Wrangell Unified Command announced the first confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the community of Wrangell.

“The Unified Command has been meeting weekly to prepare for the inevitable first confirmed case in Wrangell,” said City and Borough of Wrangell (CBW) Manager Lisa Von Bargen. “Borough leadership has been working in concert with local healthcare and emergency organizations to ensure response efforts are streamlined and thorough.”

SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) representatives are currently working with Public Health Officials to complete contact tracing and notify anyone who may have come in contact with the individual. The confirmed female patient is a local resident, and is currently asymptomatic. Upon receiving the positive test result, the patient immediately isolated and continues to quarantine at home. An investigation is currently underway to identify the source of the virus.

The CBW Emergency Operation Center (EOC) has been meeting daily and is currently activated to address any community needs that arise. The CBW will provide an additional update by 3pm tomorrow, June 8.

SEARHC Vice President and Wrangell Medical Center (WMC) Hospital Administrator Leatha Mercurieff stated “We are thankful for the months of preparedness, as we have strengthened our protocols and equipped our facilities properly. SEARHC will continue to follow the framework constructed by our Incident Command System (ICS) and implement planned precautions throughout the Consortium.”

COVID-19 testing is available in Wrangell to all patients who meet current symptomatic criteria, regardless of travel or exposure history. WMC and the AICS Clinic have established alternate screening areas for safe COVID-19 testing. Please call your provider to schedule an appointment.

Patients with chronic illnesses, or considered high-risk, should contact their provider immediately if they show symptoms. Low-risk patients are urged to self-isolate should they become sick.

Continued adherence to virus preventive practices is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, including frequent hand washing for the recommended 20 seconds; covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue; wearing masks when six-foot separation cannot be maintained; cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and objects; and getting an influenza vaccination. SEARHC and the CBW encourage residents to follow all local, state and federal mandates and practice social distancing. Visit covid19.alaska.gov, wrangellcovid19.org, and covid19.searhc.org for the latest coronavirus information, or to find the provider nearest you.

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