



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH, CITY OF KETCHIKAN, AND CITY OF SAXMAN

## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE: COVID-19 | EOC UPDATES**

Date: March 25, 2020; 6:00 p.m.  
From: Ketchikan Emergency Operations Center (EOC)  
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### **For Immediate Release**

This brief responds to media questions and provides an update on information from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and its partner agencies.

### **COVID-19 Case Count Update**

The number of positive cases of COVID-19 in Ketchikan is eleven (11). Of these cases, three (3) individuals had a recent history of travel, and eight (8) individuals did not have a recent history of travel, but were identified as having been in close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19.

### **COVID-19 Testing Update**

We have received many questions regarding the number of COVID-19 tests issued in Ketchikan, including the number of negative results of those tests. Ketchikan health providers are working to provide the information to the EOC. The providers are taking care to develop an effective process for providing the information and want to make sure that the compiled data is accurate. It is our goal to have the initial information compiled to present to the public by Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> and weekly updates thereafter.

Regarding additional testing facilities and capabilities, we are working to obtain more testing capability and have requested that people stop moving around to limit the spread. Contact tracing will require more testing which we are working on.

PeaceHealth Medical Center has established an alternate testing site to be used on an as-needed basis and by referral from Public Health in conjunction with ongoing contact investigations. The alternate site allows for a testing facility away from the center's routine medical operations. The EOC is working on plans for two additional locations for testing sites. The Creekside Family Medical Clinic and the Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) Health Clinic have agreed to provide alternate testing sites at the point that they are requested to do so by the EOC. The additional sites would be drive-through testing services.

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) updated its criteria for COVID-19 testing as to update priorities for testing patients with suspected COVID-19 infection. Not everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19. Here is some information that might help in making decisions about seeking care or testing.

- Most people have mild illness and are able to recover at home.
- There is no treatment specifically approved for this virus.
- Testing results may be helpful to inform decision-making about who you come in contact with.

CDC has guidance for who should be tested, but decisions about testing are at the discretion of state and local health departments and/or individual clinicians. Information on the CDC guidance for testing is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>

### **Employer's Compliance with Governor's Mandates and Mayoral Proclamation**

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, Dunleavy issued two mandates affecting Ketchikan to prevent the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The first was that public and private schools are closed to students through May 1, 2020. Students will receive instruction through distance delivery methods. All after school activities will be suspended during this time. The second was to limit Personal Care Services and Gatherings requiring all close contacts (people outside of a family unit) to be farther than six feet from each other to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. A list of those personal care services is provided on the Governor's Health Mandates webpage at: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, our Ketchikan and Saxman Mayors issued a joint proclamation strongly urging the citizens of Ketchikan to hunker down, shelter in place, and stay home, in order to contain the spread of COVID-19. Included in that proclamation was the strong message to businesses which are non-essential, to the extent possible, to close for a period of at least 14 days.

We want to assure the public that vital services such as emergency, fire, police, and grocery stores will remain fully functioning, open and available. The flow of goods to Ketchikan is continuing and grocery store shelves will remain stocked.

We have received multiple questions on how employers should determine whether their business or service is essential or non-essential. We have not defined essential service as a local community, and urge employers to consider the Governor's mandate and our Mayoral proclamation in order to make a determination whether their own operation is essential for the community at this time. We encourage clear guidance to their employees for how to comply with the mandates for social distancing.

**Ketchikan Gateway Borough Response:** Non-essential Borough employees have been sent home and placed on recall status. The Ketchikan International Airport continues its normal operations as this is deemed an essential service. The Pat Wise Animal Shelter, Borough bus and our water and wastewater utilities continue to operate in limited capacity.

Those Borough employees who have been sent home and can telecommute are doing so. Borough administration is working to expand remote and telecommuting capacity.

**City of Ketchikan Response:** Effective March 23<sup>rd</sup>, all non-essential City and KPU personnel were directed to remain home until further notice. Those that have the technical capability are being encouraged to work remotely.

### **Governor Dunleavy's Travel Mandate**

Given the increasing concern for new cases of COVID-19 around Alaska, Governor Dunleavy and the State of Alaska have issued a Travel Mandate which went into effect at 12:01 a.m. today. The mandate orders a 14-day quarantine following travel from out-of-state. All people arriving in Alaska, whether resident, worker or visitor, are required to self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor for illness. Arriving residents and workers in self-quarantine, should work from home, unless you support critical infrastructure. Details regarding this Travel Mandate, as well as all State Health mandates issued to date are available at <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.

The failure to follow this order is punishable by a fine of up to \$25,000, or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both pursuant to Alaska Statute 12.55.035 and Alaska Statute 12.55.135

Posters announcing the travel mandate were hung in prominent places today at the Ketchikan International Airport and at prominent places on Ketchikan's docks and harbors. Social media posts notifying the public of the order were posted on Borough and City sites today. A display ad with the information will run in the March 26 edition of the Ketchikan Daily News.

### **Creekside Family Health Center Update**

We have received questions related to the Creekside Family Health Clinic and its testing services. Creekside Family Health Clinic has expanded its procedures and protocol to allow for COVID-19 testing and patient care. Precautions have been implemented to ensure the health and well-being of patients, staff, and the residents of the Mary Frances building.

The clinic is located on the street level of the Mary Frances Building and patients are directed to promptly proceed to the clinic upon entering the building. There are notices

posted at the entrance to the building and on the business directory board regarding these instructions. Creekside staff is sanitizing the front door to the Mary Frances twice an hour with a disinfectant certified to kill Human Coronavirus.

Creekside has segregated its exam rooms into two categories: rooms that are only for patients who are healthy and are being seen for routine care, and rooms designated for patients who are sick. All patients entering the clinic are roomed directly to ensure social distancing. Sick patients are given a mask and isolated in an appropriate room. The medical team wears the recommended personal protective equipment at all times while providing care to sick patients. Upon completing a visit with any patient, the rooms are immediately cleaned with the same disinfectant that is certified to kill Human Coronavirus. The clinic reception area and contact points (doors, sinks, hand rails, etc.) are routinely sanitized, too. Further, the full premises of Creekside is being cleaned each evening after business hours by a licensed commercial disinfectant service.

Citizens can contact the clinic with questions at 907-220-9982 and are asked to call prior to going to the clinic.

### **Ongoing Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activities**

We have received questions regarding the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), Incident Command System (ICS), and the Ketchikan Emergency Operations Center (EOC). In response to those questions we are putting together a couple of instructional tools. The first component will be a pre-recorded video for community members wishing to understand ICS and how decisions are made. The second component would be an instructional tool for elected officials and their support staff to learn about ICS, and ask questions.

### **Above All Else**

Ketchikan citizens are urged **to hunker down, shelter in place, and stay home, in order to contain the spread of COVID-19.**

As a reminder, please follow these guidelines to **STOP THE SPREAD:**

- 1. Hunker down and shelter in place.**
- 2. Stay home and work from home as much as possible.**
- 3. Conduct business via telephonic or electronic means as much as possible.**
- 4. In accordance with Governor Dunleavy's March 20<sup>th</sup> Health Mandate, remember:**
  - No gatherings of more than 10 people may take place.**
  - If a gathering does take place people must be 6 feet apart from each other.**

**5. Follow all health mandates issued by Governor Dunleavy, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).**

If you are sick or suspect that you may be infected with the COVID-19 virus, take steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, **call your healthcare provider for medical advice.**

Additional current information on COVID-19 is available through the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) at [www.coronavirus.alaska.gov](http://www.coronavirus.alaska.gov). EOC information and the response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Ketchikan is updated daily on the COVID-19 Response page at <https://www.kgbak.us/913/COVID-19-Response>.

#ketchikanstayhealthy #staystrongketchikan #stepsforahealthycommunity  
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