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State agencies promote tips for stress free, healthy travel during the holidays

Preventive measures best for healthy holiday travel

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) —The Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) urge Alaskans to follow these steps for healthy, stress free travel during the holiday and flu season:

- Avoid travel if you have flu-like symptoms such as fever, sore throat, body aches, headache, fatigue, chills or cough.
- Be current on all vaccinations, including 2009 H1N1 and seasonal flu.
- Carry disinfectant wipes and travel-size bottles of hand sanitizer. Wipe down armrests, tray tables, and seat belts once seated on the plane.
- Keep in mind that masks worn by healthy people have not been shown to effectively protect against the flu; they're only recommended to be worn by those with flu-like symptoms.
- Check-in online ahead of time to expedite movement through the airport. Most airlines allow check-in up to 24 hours prior to departure.
- Arrive at the airport two hours before departure and allow time for parking.
- Prepare for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security line. Avoid prohibited items like pocket knives, limit the number of electronic devices you carry, and remove shoes, metal objects and laptop computers before entering the screening area. Pack bags with security in mind.
- Be aware that airport staff in some countries may check the health of arriving passengers by asking them to fill out medical forms, answer questions about their health, or pass through scanning devices that measure temperature. In some countries, passengers could be isolated or quarantined.

DHSS Commissioner Bill Hogan, said, "All of us can protect our families and communities by avoiding travel when we're sick and getting vaccinated for both 2009 H1N1 and seasonal influenza. Practicing good hygiene will help everyone have a happy holiday season."

Christine Klein, DOT&PF Deputy Commissioner of Aviation, said, "Airlines and airports are gearing up for the holiday season and we encourage all passengers to begin their trips with some pre-planning to ensure a much happier and stress free departure."

For more information about healthy and safe travel, go to www.flu.gov/individualfamily/travelers/ and www.tsa.gov.

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