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**Department of Health
and Social Services**

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eight additional COVID-19 cases identified at the Anchorage Pioneer Home; frequent testing will continue

August 12, 2020 ANCHORAGE— The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has confirmed eight new COVID-19 cases – seven elders and one staff member – at the Anchorage Pioneer Home. These cases are in addition to the four cases [announced on August 6](#) bringing the total number of cases at the home to 12: 10 elders and two staff members.

After the first positive case of COVID-19 was identified at the Anchorage Pioneer Home, testing of all residents was conducted as part of recommendations by the DHSS Division of Public Health, Section of Epidemiology. Employees, who are regularly tested every two weeks, also underwent another round of testing. The most recent cases involving elders are in residents living in two separate neighborhoods, with all but one of the cases being from the same neighborhood as the cases reported last week. All residents who have tested positive are currently in isolation within the home and no residents have been hospitalized at this time.

“Since the initial COVID-19 case was discovered in the Anchorage Pioneer Home, staff and leadership have responded with increased testing and other infection control measures to quickly detect and respond to any other potential cases inside the home,” said Dr. Anne Zink, Chief Medical Officer. “It always causes us great concern when this virus makes its way into our vulnerable populations, which is why I appreciate the swift and responsive actions taken at the home to ensure all affected residents and staff are receiving proper care and monitoring.”

The following guidance from the Section of Epidemiology is currently underway and has been expanded throughout the entire Anchorage Pioneer Home to protect all residents and employees:

- All elders who tested positive have been placed into isolation and will have, as much as possible, dedicated staffing.
- All employees who tested positive are self-isolating at home.
- The Anchorage Pioneer Home continues to undergo thorough daily sanitizing of all resident rooms in the home and all common areas including doorknobs, handrails, dining areas, workspaces, rest rooms and break areas.
- All current testing has been completed for residents living in the home and all test results are back from Pioneer Home staff.
- Weekly resident and staff testing will continue until further notice, in addition to immediate testing of anyone who shows symptoms.

During the pandemic, all Alaska Pioneer Homes have been continually educating staff about infection control procedures; conducting health screenings of any personnel entering the building; regularly testing employees every two weeks; immediately sending home any employee who has symptoms and requiring testing before return; screening residents daily for symptoms; and testing any residents who have any symptoms. The Anchorage Pioneer Home has been closed to visitors since March 17, 2020.

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