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Commissioner

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Department of Health  
and Social Services

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Flight evacuating U.S. citizens from Wuhan will refuel in Anchorage**

January 27, 2020 ANCHORAGE – The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) continues to monitor the ongoing outbreak of a novel coronavirus (“2019-nCoV”) that was first detected in Wuhan City, China in late December 2019. As of Jan. 26, 2020, the World Health Organization is reporting 2,014 cases and 56 deaths associated with the outbreak.

The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are working to assist with the repatriation of U.S. citizens living in Wuhan City back to the United States. As part of this repatriation effort, approximately 240 U.S. citizens (including U.S. Consulate staff and families) are currently scheduled to fly from Wuhan back to the United States this week. The airplane is planned to make a refueling stop at the Ted Stevens International Airport’s North Terminal. This terminal is currently not open to the public.

“Given Alaska’s proximity to Asia, we have been asked to assist our federal partners in this effort to facilitate travel out of China back to the United States to bring these U.S. citizens home,” said Governor Mike Dunleavy. “The State of Alaska, in combination with our local, federal and Tribal partners have been working closely to ensure the health and safety of all Alaskans while assisting with this request.”

Prior to departure from Wuhan, all passengers and flight crew will undergo health screenings by Chinese health officials and U.S. health officials. Anyone with signs or symptoms of illness will not be allowed to board the aircraft. All passengers will continue to be monitored numerous times during the flight. Additionally, during the refueling stop, all passengers will be rescreened by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Anchorage Quarantine Station personnel. Any passengers who become ill en route will be further evaluated.

“We are thankful to our local, Tribal and federal partners for their strong coordination in this effort to help these U.S. citizens return home during this rapidly progressing outbreak,” said DHSS Commissioner Adam Crum.

Alaska currently has no cases of novel coronavirus or patients under investigation; however, out of an abundance of caution, DHSS has activated its Emergency Operations Center to help coordinate detection and response efforts.

“I’m grateful during events like this that we have a strong public health system in Alaska,” said Alaska’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anne Zink. “DHSS will continue to update the public as new information becomes available.”

For more information about this novel coronavirus:

- CDC: [2019 Novel Coronavirus Situation Summary](#) (for the latest CDC information on this outbreak)
- CDC: [Traveler's Health](#) (a good reference to check before you travel anywhere)
- DHSS: [Human Coronavirus](#) (DHSS webpage for Alaska-specific information)

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