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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seven new cases of COVID-19 detected in five Alaska communities

March 21, 2020 ANCHORAGE — The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services today announced seven new cases of COVID-19 in five Alaska communities – Anchorage (1), Fairbanks (1), Ketchikan (3), Sterling (1) and Soldotna (1).

The Soldotna and the Anchorage cases were both travel-related with travel to the Lower 48. All of the other cases were non-travel related and are currently being investigated. All cases were in adults; none were hospitalized.

“All of the new cases are isolating themselves at home and their close contacts are being asked to self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms,” said Alaska’s State Epidemiologist, Dr. Joe McLaughlin. “Our thoughts go out to these people, their families and their communities. All of these individuals are being conscientious and cooperating fully with public health officials.”

McLaughlin added, “The biggest challenge in our containment effort is when people continue to interact with others when they have symptoms. I can’t underscore this point enough: If you feel even mild symptoms of a respiratory infection, you need to *immediately* go home and stay away from others until your symptoms resolve.”

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough, the City of Ketchikan and the City of Saxman issued a press release earlier this evening about the three new cases in their communities. With the total number of cases in Ketchikan up to six, the three 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.”

“It is vital that every person is doing as much as possible to slow the spread of this disease,” added Alaska’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anne Zink. “Social distancing is critical. Stay home as much as you can and, even if you’re healthy, stay away from those more vulnerable to severe illness, including those 60 or older, or anyone who might have an underlying medical condition.”

Travelers arriving from anywhere outside of Alaska should self-quarantine for 14 days, per the [March 20th Alaska Health Alert](#). Find more information about how to keep yourself and your family healthy at coronavirus.alaska.gov.

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