FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Clinton Bennett, DHSS, (907) 269-4996, clinton.bennett@alaska.gov

Ten new cases of COVID-19 detected

March 26, 2020 ANCHORAGE — The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) today announced 10 new positive cases of COVID-19 in four Alaska communities – Anchorage (5), Fairbanks (2), North Pole (2), and Juneau (1). This brings Alaska’s total case count to 69.

Six of these cases are still under investigation; the remaining four are close contacts of previously diagnosed cases. Most individuals are adults, but two are younger adults (aged 19-29) and one is a child. The child is a relative of a previously diagnosed case, and is the first youth to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

“We now have convincing evidence of community transmission in three Alaska communities—Anchorage, Fairbanks and Ketchikan,” said Dr. Joe McLaughlin, Alaska’s State Epidemiologist. “This means that COVID-19 cases are being identified in people in these communities who have had no recent out-of-state travel and no identified link to another person with confirmed COVID-19 infection. This heightens the need for vigilant adherence to social distancing measures and prompt home isolation of people who develop any symptoms of respiratory infection.”

The CDC provides these guidelines on what to do if you are sick. Of the total cases, three have been hospitalized.

So far the communities in Alaska that have had laboratory-confirmed cases include Anchorage (including JBER), Eagle River/Chugiak, Homer, Seward, Soldotna, Sterling, Fairbanks, North Pole, Palmer, Ketchikan and Juneau.

As a reminder, please follow these guidelines to STOP THE SPREAD of COVID-19:

- Wash hands frequently, cover coughs and sneezes and clean frequently-touched surfaces.
- Keep at least six feet away from others. Stay home and work from home as much as possible.
- If you are sick with a respiratory infection, even with mild symptoms, isolate yourself from others and call ahead if you need medical attention.
- In accordance with Governor Dunleavy’s COVID-19 Health Mandate 009, issued March 23, remember:
  - No gatherings of more than 10 people may take place.
  - If a gathering does take place, people must be six feet apart from each other.
• Follow all health mandates and guidance issued by Governor Mike Dunleavy, DHSS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local governments and health authorities.

Stay informed:

• Alaska’s Response
  o Find more information about how to keep yourself and your family healthy at the DHSS webpage, coronavirus.alaska.gov
  o Visit the governor’s webpage on COVID-19 at gov.alaska.gov/covid19news

• United States response: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention leads the U.S. response.

• Global response: The World Health Organization guides the global response.

This press release covers new cases between March 25 at 3 p.m. and March 26 at 3 p.m. when daily case counts are updated at coronavirus.alaska.gov.

###