

COVID-19 in Alaska

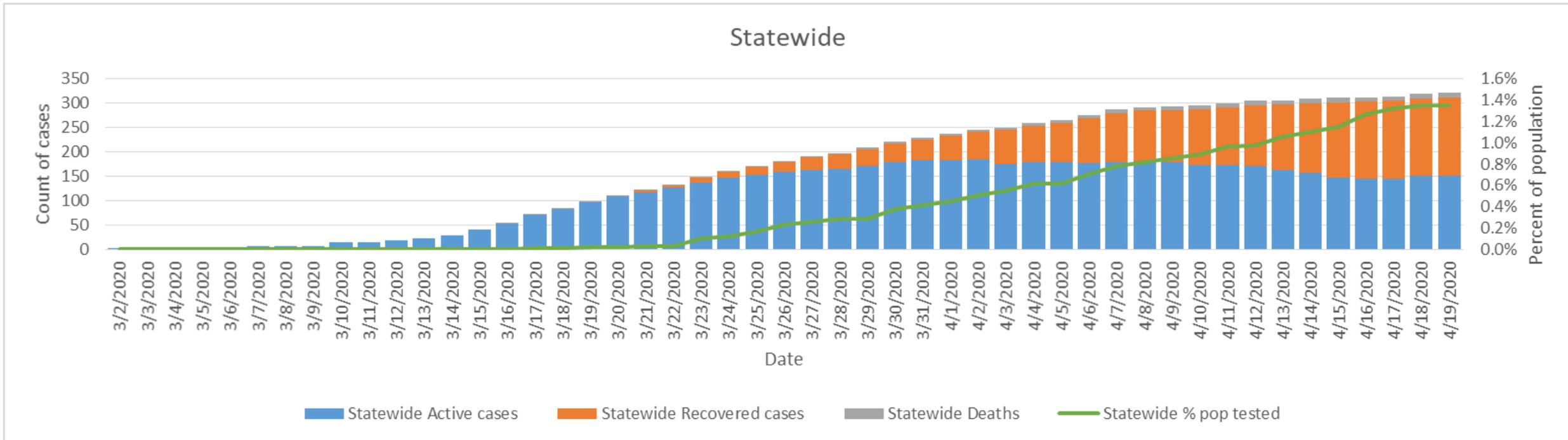
A Plan Forward

Dr. Anne Zink, Alaska's Chief Medical Officer

April 20, 2020



Case data, Statewide





When we can lift advisories and mandates



GO: If we're seeing downward trends and all is going well, we'll methodically move to **lift restrictions**.



PROCEED WITH CAUTION: If the situation is stable or we are seeing a slow increase in cases, we may ask for **voluntary measures to flatten the curve**.



STOP: If we are seeing a consistent or rapid increase in cases or if we think we are running out of capacity to care for people with COVID-19 (regardless of the trend in cases), then we will need to **reimplement some restrictions**.

Different areas may follow different rules

- We can use geography to our advantage to prevent cases from spreading. Local authorities may choose stricter or more liberal rules depending on their unique situation.
- Different communities may implement different phases at different times. This will allow for more precise control of COVID-19.

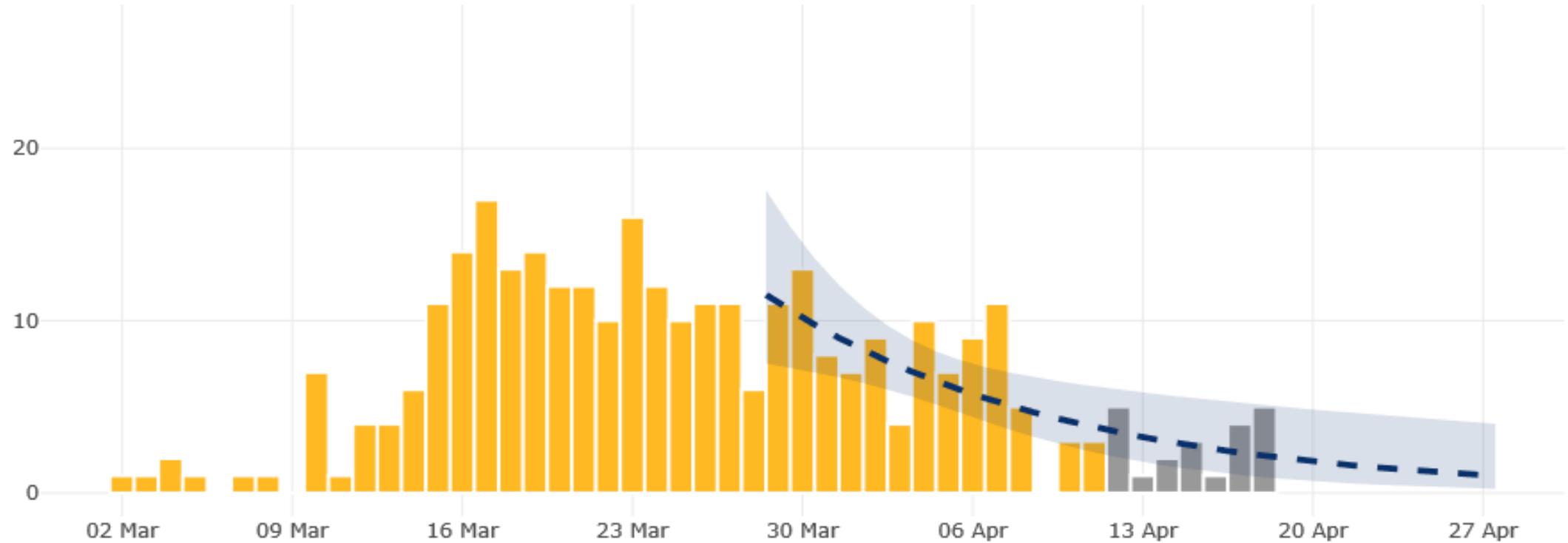
It's just like wearing a life jacket. Keep wearing it. The basic recommendations are the same.



- Wash your hands often.
- Clean and disinfect often.
- Wear a face cloth covering when out in public.
- Keep physical distance from others (at least six feet).
- Protect our vulnerable populations.
- If you have symptoms, even mild ones, isolate yourself and get tested.
- Limit gatherings and avoid large crowds.
- The more we keep doing to control the spread of COVID-19, the more safely we can open up.



Our disease burden continues to trend down.





Testing will be widespread and simple to do

Testing is essential. Alaska needs to continue to boost our testing rates.



- The State of Alaska is currently focusing on testing of symptomatic patients but in some cases, testing of asymptomatic contacts in high risk situations (i.e. long-term care facilities) may be warranted.
- Testing supplies are in good supply but should still be used wisely.
- Our public health laboratories are not at capacity and private labs are available. More tests could be run daily.
- Public health nurses are assisting in efforts to make testing simple and accessible statewide.



Monitoring and Containment



COVID-19 contact investigations
(Loren Holmes /ADN, 4/18/20)

- Our epidemiologists need to be able to follow up on every case.
- A cluster of numerous COVID-19 cases may warrant a more extensive epidemiologic response, depending on the setting (i.e. long-term care facility, hospital, prison, village, extended families, business).
- A small team of epidemiologists may be assigned to get the outbreak under control.
- This may involve telephonic collaboration with facility staff and/or other local personnel.
- May involve epidemiologists traveling to the location to assist with contact tracing, testing, and other response activities.
- In some circumstances, point-of-care tests will be sent with the team to assist with rapid testing.
- The State of Alaska has over 100 people working on this now and we plan to expand more moving forward.
- So far, we have been able to test, investigate and follow every case in Alaska.

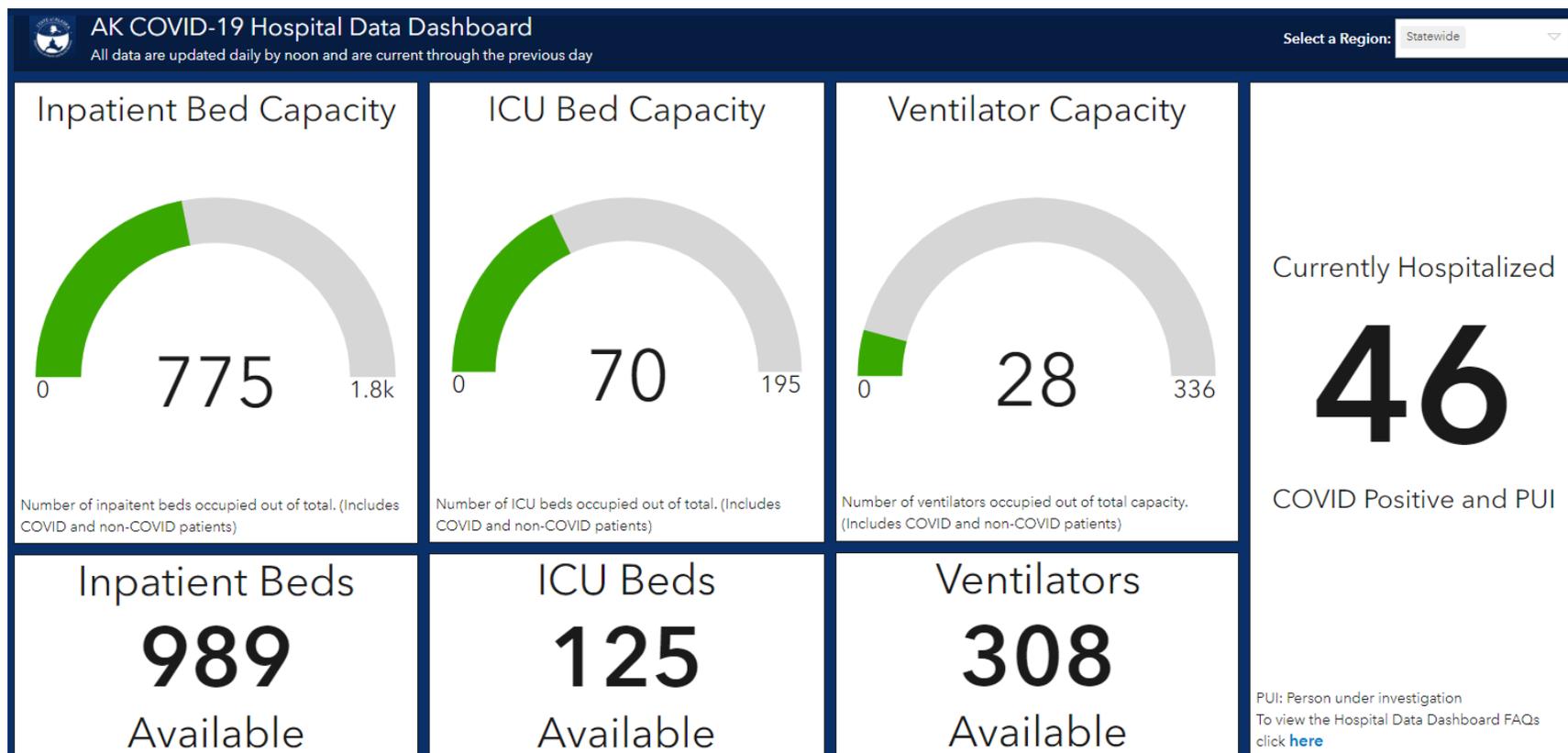


Hospital Capacity

Inpatient beds
ICU beds
Ventilators

44% capacity
36% capacity
8% capacity

- Are people seeking care for symptoms that could be COVID-19?
- Can we care for every COVID-19 patient who needs care?
- Do we have sufficient capacity to care for other patients?





What can Alaskans do?

How can we make it less likely we will need to re-implement restrictions?



- Continue teleworking if possible
- Keep social distancing
- Stay away from crowds
- Limit large gatherings and social interactions
- Track your own movements, keep a voluntary log
- Wash your hands
- Take special precautions with our high risk populations
- Stay home if you are sick

Thank you, Alaska. Everyone is essential.

- Questions regarding DHSS COVID response, including mandates and alerts, can be sent to: covidquestions@alaska.gov.
- Questions regarding DHSS data can be sent to: data.coronavirus@alaska.gov
- For general questions, contact 2-1-1 or 1-800-478-2221. Extended call center hours: 7 a.m. – 8 p.m., 7 days a week.

