



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health and Social Services

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Director's Office

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March 18, 2022

Dear Partner Agency,

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your commitment to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in your communities and our state. Your efforts, leadership, and resolve during these challenging times has not gone unnoticed. The collaboration with your agency throughout the pandemic has helped to protect the well-being of our state, and we look forward to continuing that collaboration.

Luckily, there have been many advances since the start of the pandemic including highly effective and safe vaccines, changes to isolation and quarantine requirements, and expansive dissemination of information to the public on the need to isolate and seek testing when sick, wear a mask when appropriate, and quarantine after exposure. With these changes, contact tracing of all positive cases has less efficacy than before these resources were widely available.

Effective March 31, 2022, the Division of Public Health will stop universal COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing (CI/CT) and be implementing a more strategic approach of outbreak investigation and mitigation in congregate settings. Several factors have reduced the feasibility of universal CI/CT, including the wide availability of safe and effective vaccines, advancements in therapeutics, better understanding of the epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2, and the emergence of the Omicron variant. In late February, the [CDC released updated CI/CT guidance](#) and recommendations that are consistent with this more focused approach, which is similar to what many other states are now adopting. While there is no guarantee that we may need to shift direction once again with the emergence of another variant or surge, the tools and resources are more available than ever to assist communities, businesses, and individuals.

Additional resources and information to assist are available from the CDC, including [Interim Guidance on Developing a COVID-19 Case Investigation & Contact Tracing Plan](#) in the setting where universal case investigation and contact tracing is not recommended. To learn more about the status of contact tracing in Alaska and to access information on the Alaska COVID ENX exposure notification app from the University of Alaska Anchorage, visit the [Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Contact Tracing website](#).

Thank you again for all that you do,

Handwritten signature of Anne Zink in black ink.

Anne Zink, MD, FACEP
Chief Medical Officer

Handwritten signature of Heidi Hedberg in black ink.

Heidi Hedberg
Director, Division of Public Health

Handwritten signature of Joe McLaughlin in blue ink.

Joe McLaughlin, MD, MPH
State Epidemiologist and Chief