

# Yakutat Tlingit Tribe

## Yakutat Community Health Center

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### PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2020

### Yakutat Community Health Center Limits Outpatient Services in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic:

YAKUTAT, AK (March 19, 2020) – On March 17, 2020 at 5 o'clock PM, YTT President John Buller and Council declared a State of Emergency for the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe. The State of Emergency authorizes Tribal President Buller to take all necessary steps to protect tribal members, staff members and community members from the COVID-19 Virus.

Beginning today until March 30, the YCHC is limiting staff required to be on-site. Non-essential staff will be asked to telework whenever possible. This is in support of state and federal Health Department requests for everyone to do their part in slowing the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, this will allow our health care system to adequately prepare for the effects of this pandemic.

Additional efforts to slow the spread of illness include transitioning to an urgent care model. This means that providers are still available on-call 24 hours per day for emergent needs, however we have cancelled all on-site clinics for the month of March and all referrals have been delayed. At this time only pregnant or emergent patients will be transported out of the community for medical needs.

We are asking the community of Yakutat to come to the clinic only if you feel it is *absolutely necessary* to see a provider. If you are experiencing any of the COVID-19 symptoms we ask that you call the clinic to arrange for a provider to either meet you at your car or come to the Emergency Room entrance if you need to be admitted. Please see CORONAVIRUS Update from YCHC 3.18.2020.

The YCHC supply of testing materials and protective equipment is limited. We will use these supplies judiciously. We will be following CDC guidelines regarding who receives COVID testing. As with the rest of the country, the COVID test requires a medical provider's recommendation.

We ask all visitors and residents to comply with the state mandated self-quarantine for 14 days after traveling into the community. Our most vulnerable population (elderly, those with compromised immune systems, the chronically ill, and pregnant women) are at risk.

YCHC will continue to closely monitor the progression of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and will inform tribal members, staff and the general public on any further measures the Tribe implements following the guidance of public health experts.

All community members are encouraged to stay informed by visiting the World Health Organization, CDC and Alaska State Infections Disease Program.

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Center for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>

AK State Infections Disease Program: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/default.aspx>

YTT President John Buller and YCHC Executive Health Director Rhoda Jensen approved this message.

**Our Mission is to empower our community to thrive physically, mentally and spiritually.**

Our work is guided by traditional values of: Listening with respect, Working together, Responsibility and Care of Self, Inclusivity and Fairness, and Living in Peace and Harmony.



## CORONA VIRUS 3.18.2020

**WHAT IS IT?** Corona virus is a new virus that spreads by respiratory droplets. The illness caused by the virus ranges from mild to severe. People most at risk are the elderly, those immunosuppressed, and those with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease.

**RISK:** The risk of exposure is increasing steadily with the increased number of cases in the US.

### HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS:

- Spread from person-to-person who are in close contact (within 6 feet)
- Spread through respiratory droplets that enter the air when a person coughs or sneezes
- May be spread by touching a surface on which there are viruses then touching your own mouth, nose, or eyes
- An infected person is most contagious when they are the sickest but may spread the illness even without any symptoms

### SYMPTOMS (MAY OCCUR 2-14 DAYS AFTER EXPOSURE):

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

### PREVENTION:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (6 ft distance recommended)
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects (door knobs, bathroom, counter tops, table tops, etc.); a regular household cleaning spray or wipe should be effective
- **WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and rub for at least 30 seconds

### IF YOU ARE SICK WITH RESPIRATORY ILLNESS:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, discard the tissue, and wash your hands
- Wear a face mask if you have respiratory symptoms
- Avoid sharing personal household items (dishes, drinking glasses, towel, bedding, etc.)
- Monitor your symptoms and seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening
- **CALL THE CLINIC FOR INSTRUCTIONS.** PLEASE do not enter the front lobby.
- **STAY HOME** except to go to the Clinic for evaluation. Do not go to work, school, shopping, or any public gatherings.

The YCHC supply of testing materials and protective equipment is limited. We will use these supplies judiciously. Please understand that we will be following CDC guidelines regarding who gets tested for COVID. As with the rest of the country, the COVID test requires a medical provider's recommendation.