



CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL

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Dear Wrangell:

I never would have imagined writing a letter to our community about the local response to a global pandemic, but here I am.

As everyone is well aware, we are sailing through uncharted waters with COVID-19. Over the past month we have prepared to deal with the virus's inevitable arrival. Although we faced several unanticipated challenges, we have been able to problem solve and develop creative solutions. I can assure you that everyone working at the city and our medical facilities are doing all that they can to keep Wrangell safe and healthy. As of today there are no confirmed COVID 19 cases in Wrangell.

Recently the Assembly passed an Emergency Declaration. This will assist us with accessing certain State and Federal resources. It should also remove procedural impediments to responding to issues quickly. I am also hopeful that it highlights to the community the importance of taking this situation seriously. Responding correctly may well be a matter of life and death. It is vitally important for all of us to follow the recommended guidelines to ensure that we all stay healthy.

- 1. If you feel unwell, please stay home.** Don't shop or go to work. Isolate yourself until you feel better. If you are worried that you might have contracted COVID-19 please reach out to the clinic to see if you meet the criteria for testing. Please don't just show up at the clinic or hospital, call first. SEARHC and Wrangell EMS have set up a remote testing area that you can go to. You must make an appointment to access this service. **DO NOT JUST SHOW UP.**
- 2. If you are returning to the island on Alaska Airlines or by boat please self-isolate for 14 days.** It is advisable to take your temperature twice a day. If you have a fever over 100.3 please contact the clinic and explain your situation. Don't risk spreading the virus. You can have no symptoms and still be infected.

3. **NO gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.** The city issued an Emergency Order on Tuesday temporarily prohibiting group gatherings of 10 or more people. The city has closed its facilities wherever possible. We are limiting access in others to avoid the risk of our employees being exposed. Remember that we closed the schools to reduce the risk of children spreading the virus amongst themselves. Please explain to your kids that they need to practice social distancing whenever possible.
4. **The more vulnerable should stay home and isolate themselves as much as possible.** This includes people over 60 and those with medical condition that weaken the body's immune system or that affects the respiratory system.
5. **Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and disinfect regularly.**

The hard truth is that we are going to have cases of COVID-19 in our community. It is going to happen. We can, however, lessen the impact and duration of the infection if we all work together to stop the spread of the virus.

It was a gut punch to hear that COVID-19 was in Ketchikan. For many, the virus became very real, very quickly. I don't want people to panic when we do have a confirmed case. We will continue to ensure that the basic services of the city continue and that the medical facilities are supported to do the best that they can. We have three ventilators in the hospital. It will not take long to overwhelm these resources. We must all understand that the reality on the ground may not match our expectations.

I want to thank our management teams at the City, SEARHC hospital and clinic, and at the Fire and Police Departments. Everyone is working tirelessly to make sure the community and healthcare system are ready to meet whatever challenges occur. This community is blessed to have such a fine team.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that we are a strong community. We take care of each other when things are tough. Alaskans are about rising above and meeting challenges head on. We will make it through this together.

Be Healthy Everyone,

Steve Prysunka, Mayor