

Mike Dunleavy  
Governor

www.Gov.Alaska.Gov



Office of the  
Governor

Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
20-032

## **Governor Issues Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration for COVID-19**

*State resources activated in response to COVID-19 preparedness*

**March 11, 2020 (Anchorage, AK)** – Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy today issued a declaration of public health disaster emergency in response to the COVID-19 anticipated outbreak. The declaration initiates a unified command structure between the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), and the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and fully engages state departments to utilize all capabilities to ensure a swift and effective COVID-19 response.

“My administration has worked daily to coordinate our response efforts and keep Alaskans informed about COVID-19. Beginning with the flight to repatriate Americans living in Wuhan in January, our team has responded with a level of professionalism that is a model for the nation,” **said Governor Mike Dunleavy**. “Alaska still does not have any confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus disease; however, by issuing this disaster declaration, we are taking a proactive approach to accessing all necessary resources. As we are faced with the potential to have confirmed cases in Alaska, the state will elevate its response and bring to bear every element of state government needed to address this serious illness.”

“DHSS, and the State of Alaska, continue to prepare for and learn from the novel coronavirus outbreak around the world,” **said Adam Crum, commissioner of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services**. “These efforts have been undertaken alongside municipalities, Tribal health, and our federal partners, and as this public health risk continues to evolve it is highly probable that an outbreak of COVID-19 will occur in this state in the near future.”

“We have seen a great level of voluntary coordination between local, Tribal, state, and federal partners to date. As the impact of the virus expands we are here to support our DHSS partners. We have established a Unified Command and activated our plans to coordinate activities statewide,” **said Maj. Gen. Torrance Saxe, commissioner of the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**. “Uniformed members of the

Alaska Organized Militia, including the Alaska National Guard, are prepared to respond to the needs of our communities and DHSS as requested.”

In addition to setting up the unified command, the declaration permits the DHSS commissioner to exercise state statutes related to isolation and quarantine measures, and makes it easier for the state to purchase supplies, hire temporary staff, and access disaster relief funds for public assistance. The DHSS emergency operations center has been activated since January. The State of Alaska emergency operations center been on standby for several weeks.

On March 2, 2020, [Governor Dunleavy submitted a supplemental budget amendment](#) to fund COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts. The supplemental budget amendment provides \$4 million in state funds and allows for the receipt of \$9 million in federal support for mitigation and response efforts.

As of March 10, 2020, 47 individuals in Alaska have been tested for COVID-19, with 31 negative tests and 16 tests currently pending. State health officials expect to detect cases in the near future and are preparing for the likelihood of community transmission in Alaska. Nationally, 647 cases have been reported with 25 deaths.

All Alaskans are encouraged to stay informed, listen to their local elected leaders and their primary care providers.

[Click here](#) for a signed copy of the disaster declaration and additional information. For the latest information on Alaska’s response to COVID-19, please visit <http://coronavirus.alaska.gov>.

###

**Media Contact:** Jeff Turner, [jeff.turner@alaska.gov](mailto:jeff.turner@alaska.gov) (907) 310-4961