

**COVID-19 Tribal Leadership Session Minutes
May 18, 2020**

Angie Gorn, CEO, NSHC	Reba Lean, NSHC	Mark Peterson, MD, Medical Director, NSHC
Kelly Bogart, NSHC	Megan MacKiernan, NSHC	Cameron Piscoya, NSHC
Kristen Timbers, NSHC	Carol Charles, NSHC	Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle
Joleen Oleson, Kawerak	Opik Ahkinga, City of Diomede	Cherri McConnell, Kawerak
Mary Davis, Kawerak	Jason Harrell, NSHC	Charles Swanson, Native Village of Koyuk
Dan Harrelson, City of White Mountain	Howard Weyiouanna, City of Shishmaref	Dorothy Barr, Native Village of White Mountain
Judith Daniel, Elim	Glenn Steckman, City of Nome	Deanna Stang, SOA Public Health

*Over 40 people attended today's meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION
Introduction to Meeting – Angie Gorn, NSHC CEO	<p>Angie gave an introduction regarding the purpose, standing agenda, and frequency of the call. The daily call will be at 11 am Monday through Friday and will include NSHC administration and Medical Staff. The Standing Agenda includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Prayer 2) Medical Staff Briefing 3) Updates 4) Comments and Questions <p>Note- Any questions may be sent to Reba Lean at rlean@nshcorp.org anytime or text to 907-434-1927 and they will be answered during the 11:00 am call.</p>
Prayer	Prayer was given
Medical Staff Briefing – Dr. Mark Peterson, NSHC Medical Director	<p>Dr. Peterson gave medical staff update on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alaska: Over the weekend there was 9 new cases , 8 resident(Anchorage-3, Chugiak-1, Homer -2, Bethel Census Area-1, Juneau-1), 1 nonresident(caught in quarantine while in Dillingham. Fishery's working up to various communities and quarantining period of time and getting testing with that quarantine. It's an excellent program and they can catch cases before they get out and get exposed to anyone) , 396 total cases, 344 recovered, no new deaths, for a total of 10 deaths, 42 active cases in the state, total of 43 people in the hospital - As things open up a bit we are going to see some cases, and as long as we have quarantine and testing it really catches these folks - Testing at the airport is a good ideal, bethel doesn't do permits but they do testing at the airport and that is how they caught this one - ANMC: no change from morning report, 2 patients in the hospital with COVID-19, total of 15 outpatient - NSHC: no additional positive just the one from early April, we have tested almost 1,400 people, 166 pending rest of those are negative, testing we have done is up around 1,700 test - We know that we are going to get cases in the state, it's going to happen, and may get occasional cases in our region but think we will be testing enough and watching enough, and doing enough quarantine that it is likely that if we get cases we can get them caught pretty early, that is our goal - We know the virus will come from the airport because that is our access point

Updates

Angie gave the following statement about testing at the Airport:

- We do commend and thank the City of Nome for having a permitting process
- We know that it is cumbersome for the passenger as well as for the City of Nome
- Does provide for some type of system, tracking mechanism, so that the City of Nome can be informed on who is entering our region and from where
- We did not have a permitting process, folks would be able to travel and there would be no system to track folks
- Right now the state mandate required that if you travel out of state and you come into Nome, per the state mandate you have to quarantine for 14 days
- There is nothing in place to require anyone to quarantine for 14 days if you travel within the state of Alaska
- That permitting process that we have in place has also required a 14 day quarantine for folks traveling from within the state of Alaska
- Something that Norton Sound would like to propose to start as early as tomorrow is to give passengers within the state of Alaska coming to Nome an option and that option would be either 1) do the 14 day quarantine, you travel in from somewhere in the state of Alaska, you arrive in Nome, you do a 14 day quarantine or 2) test upon arrive at the airport, and then from day 1 to day 7 do a quarantine, and then rest test on day 8, and of course if those test are negative now your released from your quarantine
- Again this is something we have been talking about at Norton Sound with our medical staff
- We are proposing this to Glen Steckman at the City
- We are putting this in writing
- Having the entrance permit with testing will allow us to have a list on who is coming, where they are coming from, where they are going to, and make sure we offer testing those coming from a high risk area, and those heading out to the villages, and those coming from out of state

Dr. Peterson's comment:

- We want to catch people early on and people want to get tested and the airport is a great place to want to get tested
- Important thing for the testing options, those who have been in Alaska for 14 days either coming from Alaska to Nome, it allows to drop their quarantine in half from 14 days to 7 days
- Now a person can think about going to Nome from Anchorage and get that four wheeler or groceries that you need without having to do 14 days of testing

Deanna Stang w/ Public Health Update:

- **The State of Alaska has updated their reopen Alaska response plan document**
- **On the back side of the document they have included the four Metrix that the state is going to be looking at on a daily and weekly basis**
- **They are looking at four Metrix:**
 - **Disease activity**
 - **Testing capacity**
 - **Public Health capacity**

AGENDA ITEMS**DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION**

- **Health Care capacity**
- **In each Metrix they are asking what we do need to do to achieve to safely move up the restriction stage**
- **You can find the this information at <https://covid19.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/05142020-Reopen-Alaska-Plan.pdf>**

Question and Comments

- **How long do you have to keep any travel permitting, travel banning in place?**
 - Glenn: the council talked about working with NSHC, as they have explained to limit the time a person needs to be quarantine coming into Nome to 7 days as long if they agree to do the testing. The testing is voluntarily. Dr. Peterson and NSHC has said let's look at it every week to two weeks to see what the situation is and also to follow the governor's mandates which right now are not encouraging, only essential travel between the off road communities and to Anchorage. We are following the mandate that is issued by the governor on out of state travel. The city mandates as much as the governors mandate the only thing we are doing are testing for people that come up if they need to come up and to put an ideally 7 day quarantine instead of a two week quarantine.
 - Dr. P: For intrastate travel. Guess the answer is we can go week by week and see where things are at and reassess.
- **Scientific evidence was requested that shows what the city is doing is warranted.**
 - Dr. P: what we discovered in the country is the reason this pandemic continues to storm 1.5 million people in the country is because a lot of people are asymptomatic. They carry the virus and have no symptoms. The only way to know if they have it is to test. That is how Bethel caught this one case that went out to the Nunapitchuk. They caught it at the airport, asymptomatic, would have been in the village, would have wandered around the village, would have been there, and would have spread that virus throughout the entire community. They locked the entire village down, shut the entire village down. They are fortunate to have caught that at the airport. The only reason why they caught it is because they tested. Testing is the key, the location of testing is at the airport because we don't have it in our region right now, and it will come through the airport. Testing at the airport, testing everybody who will agree to do it. People can refuse, we can't fight that.
- **Is there punitive if they disagree?**
 - Dr. P: No there's not. We encourage people. There is nothing punitive, we want to encourage, and we want it to be a positive experience. We know it's those asymptomatic people that are going to bring it in. They don't know they have it, they come in, we test them, and we find them and can isolate them right away. That is real scientific evidence from keeping it from coming in. I know the city council is going to be meeting on things and I'm sure they can put a specific length on that. Norton Sound does not make that determination. We just give the information based on the science. What are the other communities doing in the state of Alaska? What recommended across the country? What's recommended is to test, and to test at those locations where virus is most likely to be. We are doing mandatory testing of all employees that have contact with patients every two weeks. Why is that? Because that's likely where a virus can be. We are recommended

at the airport. Why? Because that is likely where the virus will come in. We are recommending of any people that have frequent patient contact or contact with just lots of people in the community grocery store clerks, etc. They should really be testing on a regular basis as well. That's the target. We are not saying you can't come to Nome, don't come to Nome. We are saying come to Nome, let's cut your quarantine in half, just do a test at the airport and we will test you again on day 8 and you will be good to go. It's a drop by 50% of the quarantine requirement for intrastate travel within Alaska which we think is great.

- **Is it still 14 days for interstate?**
 - Dr. P: The governor's mandate is still 14 days for anybody coming in from out of state. We do not expect that to change, but it may. Part of the reason that we are not going to say let's do this for 90 days is because the state may come up with some changes in their travel mandate and we have to respond to their changes. Instead of setting things in stone until the pandemic is over with. I think it's better to loosen what we can, which is already happening, we are not requiring permits from the villages to Nome and back and it sounds likes like possibly the permitting system from Nome out to Anchorage may be going away too we will see. Were really reducing, the city is looking at reducing permitting, and quarantine. We are seeing a reduction in everything.
- **Dr. P: For health care workers there is an allowance for them that we have not taken as a health care corporation. There is actually an allowance where health care worker can come from wherever in the lower 48 and come right to work, wear an N95 mask, get some testing, and go right to work. Well we have chosen not to do that. We have chosen to stick with what all community members have to do which is 14 day quarantine because we can do that. We are doing these announcements and calls every day because we have the ability to do that. We are doing well, we are financially strong, and we have the ability to do that. We're supporting the city by doing that. We're supplementing what the city can do by doing this. We are joining with them on this effort. We as a corporation are requiring all of our physicians to do a 14-day quarantine because we feel it's the right thing to do.**
- **When a person comes, is there a place for quarantine?**
 - Dr. P: Norton Sound is involved with quarantine for patients that are traveling for medical reasons. If we have patients that are traveling to Anchorage or Nome, if quarantine is required than NSHC has housing lined up for them to provide housing? We have housing; Amy Hollis is the manager of that department and works with the patient directly. For people that are traveling not for medical but for essential personal travel NSHC is not involved with that. If they are coming from Anchorage back to their village they will just quarantine back in their village and would not need to quarantine in Nome.
- **When a person is coming from Nome to a village do they need to quarantine here in Nome before they go on? What is the transition from the Nome to a**

- **On the Bethel case, they did the testing at the airport and caught the positive case at the airport but then they continued to send that person to the village. Why didn't they put that person in quarantine and isolation in Bethel instead of sending them to the village?**
 - Dr. P: It was a swab me now, and let me know, then left to get on the connecting flight. The patient did not have any symptoms. They got the result later in the day and called them. That is good because they would have not caught them and would have infected a lot of people at that time. So the reason they are delaying in getting results because it has to go to the hospital and get run with the other test so there is a little delay and the patient did not have any symptoms and did not expect to test positive and is a concerning thing. This is all in flux. We want to try and open things as rapidly as we can. We are already offering a deducting to 7 days and how long do we want to continue that for? Let's see what happens on the road system as the state is opening up. Maybe things are going to stay really stable, that's great. We can look at eventually dropping the quarantine. NSHC can look at making recommendations for dropping the quarantine and just going with testing. That's a possibility but think we need to wait and see a couple of weeks because the road system is just opening everything up and if there is going to be a spike we are going to see that in about two weeks. That is one of the reasons why we want to take things in a step by step fashion. It feels like this weekend like there have been more cases than what we've had. There have been fisheries cases. Maybe there are going to be more like that or maybe not maybe it's going to be looking good.
- **Is NSHC offering antibody testing at the hospital?**
 - Yes. Antibody is something we can offer. We have talked about it a few times on the call but can summarize it again. Antibody tests tend to be much more useful in areas that have had a lot of positive cases. For example New York, and New Jersey, where there has been a lot of exposure. A lot of people should have built up antibodies. You can test a large percentage of the population and can feel pretty confident that the positive cases that you get are true positives to that COVID virus. The problem with antibody testing in areas where there's not many positives, where people have not been infected broadly by the virus, is that the positives is highly likely they will be falsely positives. So if we test a wide variety of people in our region and there was a number of positive they are probably going to be false positives because that particular test has a fairly high false positive rate. That's the problem and gets back to the nasal swab virus testing's really the best testing we can be doing now to try and catch up. Do think there could come a time where testing alone without quarantine might work for our region. Again I think we need to do a short amount of quarantine and the state would be supportive of that too with that combination.
- **MAS: Is it possible that we can set up testing at the Nome Airport?**
 - Dr. P: Yes we are in the process of trying to start that in Nome.

- DS: On the state providers call on Thursday they have contractors in place in Anchorage and Fairbanks and they are going to roll it out in the airport next but believe that testing is available for critical infrastructure. For example they were trying to prioritize the firemen who need to come in to respond to a fire in the State of Alaska. The plan has not been fully rolled out on who's testing will be available for if it's only going to be for critical infrastructure or if it's going to be opened up for the general public and they have also partnered with Fred Meyer to offer testing in Anchorage and Fairbanks and potentially other locations throughout Alaska that have a Fred Meyer available.
 - **Did they announce after that, that the Bethel case that, that person tested negative later on?**
 - DS: No other update other than what has been posted on the YK website and the press briefing.
 - **Patients travel to Anchorage and were not tested, went back to Teller and tried getting tested at the clinic to shorten their quarantine but the clinic turned them down and said they could not test until next Monday.**
 - Dr. P: Want's to explain that testing does not replace quarantine. So if Teller required a 14 day quarantine for people that are coming back than it doesn't matter if you get a test that is negative. You would still need to quarantine for 14 days. There is no testing that replaces quarantine in Teller. There was some misinformation in Teller that got out to the community and if there is 14 day quarantine in Teller than that is what it is. If somebody wants to get a test in Teller or in any village while they are in quarantine, it would make sense that test may be about 7 days into the quarantine because that is about the time, if you picked it up the virus, about 7 days is when you are most likely to show virus so get tested about a week into it. It will take 3-4 days to get results back so you are looking at 10-12 days and if that is negative into your quarantine that is a good sign that you probably do not have the virus. Wanted to make it clear that there is no situation where you could go to your village for your 14 day quarantine get a test right away and if it's negative come out of quarantine. That does not work.
 - MM: There may be reason in the village why they do not do testing let's say on a Friday because the test would time out and not be any good.
 - MAS: We will do some follow up with ANMC on when they are doing testing before coming back to the region.
 - **Is there a plan to try and have a plan down the road or can be done already for test swabs to be done in the village and testing in Nome?**
 - Dr. P: We are working on that. In the villages because it takes a while for the swab to our hospital and we cannot count on it being within 12 hours we have chosen to use swabs that go in a transport medium it's a liquid medium. The only place where we can run test that go in a liquid medium is ANMC and it takes a while to get those test done. We may have a way that we can get cartridges to come to the Nome hospital and if we get them we can have those swabs from the villages come to us.

Have to request from the state which we are sending in letters and working on it.

- **Which Villages has quarantine or isolations?**
 - At least every village has identified a location and working on getting an MOA in place. Racheal Lee will provide an update tomorrow, May 19th.
- **What response teams do we have for our villages?**
 - NSHC has a team, the state has a team, ANMC, and ANTHC also have teams that can come up and help but we do have a response team.
- **What is the forecast with testing capabilities?**
 - We do have enough supplies; the rest of the state is catching up. We've been able to continue to get supplies.
- **Are the people who have had it and are getting it a second time around if they were asymptomatic or if they had symptoms?**
 - Dr. P: Most of the evidence suggests that they are going to build antibodies that are protective for a certain period of time and that are what probably most scientist are thinking most on this. There are a handful of cases where people have tested positive twice but do have a feeling that maybe one was a false positive. Don't think we have to be real fearful that people are going to get sick over and over again. Don't see anything yet that says that is the case. Again 6-9-12 month's down the road we will have more information on that. Don't think it's a big concern and big fear that we will get it multiple times, but only time will tell.
- **OA: Testing after 7 days after a 7 day quarantine, and taking a test on 8th day, the test results show that you don't have COVID-19. Is it too soon to tell that you have the virus?**
 - The average time to contact to showing symptoms is about 5 days. 14 is probably the max that could show symptoms. The idea is trim it down to something tolerable for the community. 7-8 days will catch majority of the people.
 - Dr. Bolen – We are having all BSSD teachers to Anchorage for training. They will serve their 14 days. They get tested on the jet in Nome then in the villages. Then 14 day quarantine in the villages.