



**Date:** October 15, 2021

**To:** Assembly Health Policy Committee

**Thru:** Joe Gerace, Anchorage Health Department Director

**From:** Dr. Michael Savitt, Anchorage Health Department Chief Medical Officer

**Subject:** October 15, 2021, COVID-19 Risk Assessment Update for the Municipality of Anchorage

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This weekly report shares data available on the State of Alaska (SOA) and Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) websites for the period October 7, 2021 – October 13, 2021, as well as some older and newer data as noted. Unless otherwise indicated, these data are for cases reported in the MOA.

## Cases, Hospitalizations, Deaths, and Clusters

- **Alert level.** Anchorage is in the High risk alert level per [DHSS](#) and [CDC](#) transmission data tracking. DHSS Alert levels are based on the case counts over the past 7 days as well as the number of reported cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days.
- **Case count this week.** There were 2,510 new resident cases this week, compared to 2,143 new resident cases reported last week.
- **Daily cases.** The number of reported cases in the past 7 days per 100,000 population is 868.6, a 17% increase over last week. The current 14-day rolling daily average of 114.8 cases per 100,000 residents, is a 9% decrease over last week. Two weeks ago (10/1/2021 report) the 14-day rolling daily average was 137.5 cases per 100,000 residents.
- **Age and race distribution:** Age and race breakdowns will now be provided in the last report of each month.
- **Cumulative cases.** As of October 13, there have been 52,611 confirmed cases in the MOA. This includes 51,457 Anchorage residents in- and out-of-state and 1,154 nonresidents who tested positive in Anchorage.
- **Current hospitalizations.** As of October 12, there are 93 hospitalized COVID-19 cases. The number of hospitalized cases ranged between 84 and 94 this week. This is an increase compared to last week where the range was 81 to 91 cases.
- **Deaths.** There have been 298 Anchorage deaths, 292 among Anchorage residents, and six among nonresidents from the beginning of the pandemic. This is an increase of 13 resident deaths since last week. There have been 108 deaths reported since the beginning of July 2021, when [genome sequencing showed](#) that over 80% of the variant prevalence was Delta.

## Health Care Capacity

- **ICU beds.** On average, between October 6 and October 12, only 4.23% of staffed adult ICU beds at the three acute care hospitals in Anchorage were available. This down from the previous

week (7.65%) and similar to the week prior to that (3.96%) Between October 6 and October 12, the number of staffed adult ICU beds ranged from 66 to 75, which is up from last week, and the number of available staffed adult ICU beds ranged from 0 to 6. Data can be found on the [MOA hospital summary dashboard](#).

- **Hospital Closures.** Anchorage hospitals are either near capacity or at capacity. For real-time Alaska hospital status regarding Adult ICU, Adult Non-ICU Inpatient, Psych, and Emergency Department visit <https://alaska-dhss.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/8edf91ce0e474126a8c6ace0250f952c>.

## Infection Rate

- The Rt from the SOA model on October 13 was 1.03, down from last week. For additional comparison, the Rt was 1.33 on July 7, 2021 and more recently was 1.19 on September 23, 2021. We expect to see weekly fluctuations in the Rt, but it is important to note **that Rt above one indicates that the virus is continuing to spread**. The virus is continuing to spread as Rt approaches 1.0, but at a lower rate of transmission. See Table 1.

**Table 1: Reproductive Number Estimates**

Geography, Source	October 6	October 13
Anchorage, SOA model, (in-state residents only)	1.08	1.03

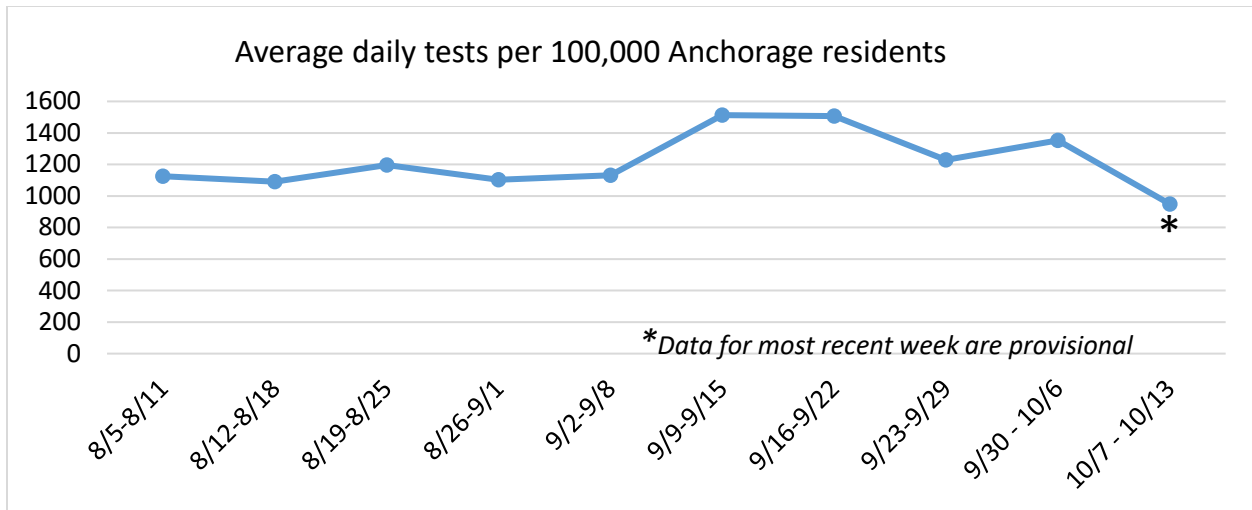
## Testing

- **Percent positivity:** On average, between October 7 and October 13, approximately 11% of COVID-19 PCR and antigen tests had positive test results. This is the same as last week's positivity rate (11%). Percent positivity increasing above 3% indicates that we are missing cases because the community may not be accessing the available testing.
- **Test volume:** Tests are not counted until test results are received. Test counts for more recent weeks will increase as more test results are received. Increasing testing volume along with increased test percent positivity suggests that the increasing case counts are real and not just an artifact of testing. See Table 2 and Figure 1.

**Table 2: Weekly Test Volume Indicators, updated as of October 14, 2021**

Indicator	Sep 23 – Sep 29	Sep 30 – Oct 6	Oct 7 – Oct 13 <i>Provisional</i>
Tests in the week	24,865	27,352	19,201
Average daily tests per 100,000	1,229	1,352	949

Figure 1. Average Daily Test Per 100,000 Anchorage Residents

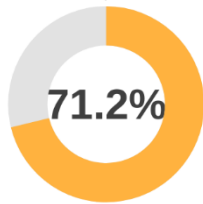


## Vaccination

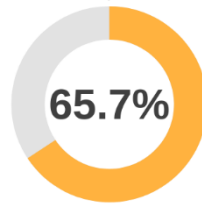
### Percent of Population Vaccinated

Ages 12+, including JBER

**FIRST DOSE (12+)**  
Percent with one dose complete



**SERIES COMPLETE (12+)\***  
Percent with full series complete



\*Vaccine series complete: Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require a two-dose series. Johnson&Johnson/Jansen vaccine requires a single dose series.

Data updated as of October 13, 2021

According to VacTrAK, 173,697 first COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to residents aged 12 and older within Anchorage, and 160,154 vaccine series have been completed as of October 13. It looks as though DHSS has reconciled the overestimation of fully vaccinated among 12+, though this resulted in dropping the percent of 65% vaccinated since last week.

VacTrAK does not include data regarding vaccine doses administered by the Veterans Administration (VA) or the Department of Defense (DoD).

The proportion of individuals in each community that are vaccinated is shown in Table 4. The highest proportion of Girdwood residents are

vaccinated, followed by Active-Duty Military at JBER.

*There are often delays in vaccination reporting data as the VacTrAK system processes results and removes duplications. Please note that we will be adding data on third doses and booster shots when it is available.*

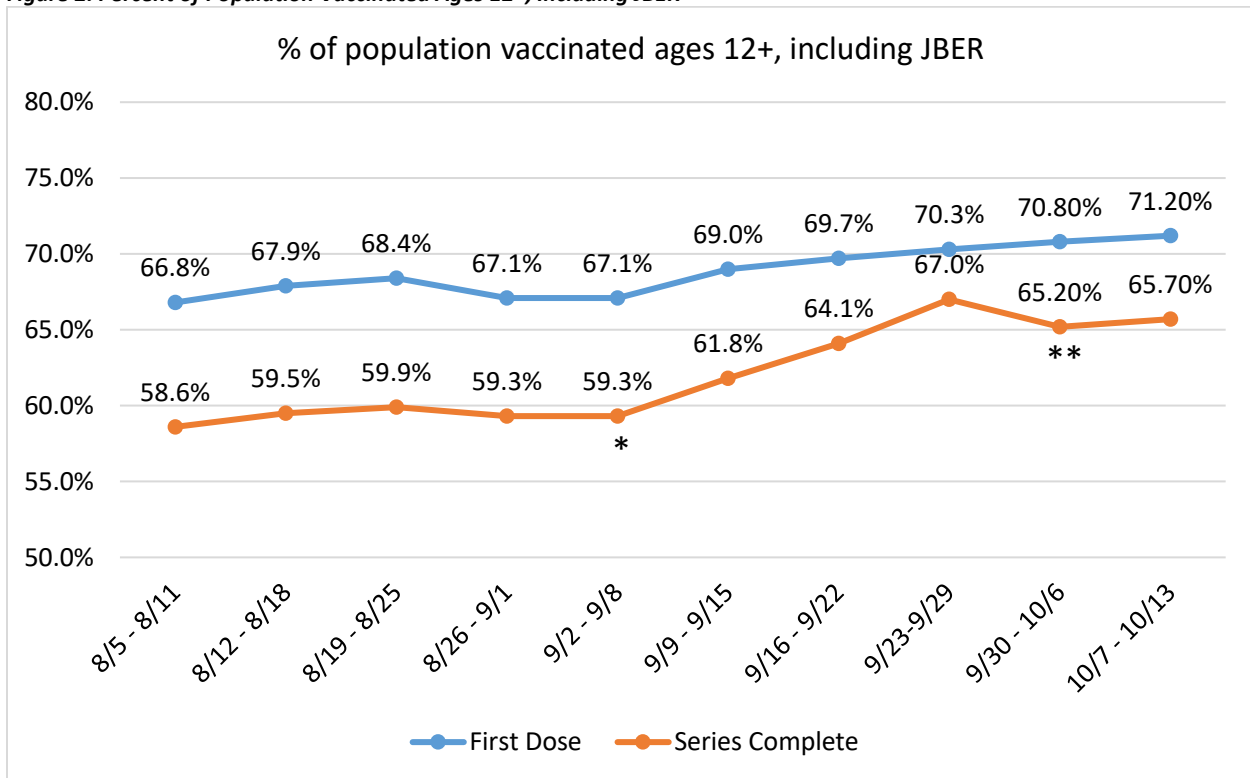
**Table 3: Resident Vaccination by Dose and Population Percentage, Municipality of Anchorage. (VacTrAK & JBER)**

Anchorage	First Dose	Series Complete	Anchorage Population
Total Vaccinated Individuals	173,697	160,154	288,970
12+ Percent Vaccinated (Eligible)	71.2%	65.7%	243,890
65+ Percent Vaccinated (Eligible)	77.8%	74.6%	35,455
Total Population Percent Vaccinated (Eligible + Ineligible)	60.1%	55.4%	288,970

**Table 4: Resident Vaccination by Population Percentage by Community (All Ages)**

Anchorage	First Dose	Series Complete	Population
All Communities	60.1%	55.4%	288,970
Anchorage Municipality	58.9%	54.1%	249,923
Chugiak	47.5%	44.0%	8,843
Eagle River	47.6%	44.1%	28,462
Girdwood	91.3%	84.0%	1,742
JBER (Active Duty Military Only)	68.8%	66.3%	10,029

**Figure 2. Percent of Population Vaccinated Ages 12+, Including JBER**



\*Data for the week of 9/2-9/8 was unavailable

\*\*DHSS is currently investigating the overestimation of fully vaccinated among 12+

## School Transmission

School is in session, leading to a high volume of unvaccinated children interacting. Universal masking is required for all individuals while inside any Anchorage School District (ASD) school or building.

A total of 3,010 confirmed cases have been reported within the Anchorage School District since 8/12/21. This includes both students and teachers. On October 14, there were 525 active cases reported by ASD. This is the highest number since we started reporting this measure. Last week, the ASD 14-day rolling daily average case rate is 125.4 per 100,000, compared to the MOA case rate of 114.8.

As of noon on October 14, no schools have partial or complete closures. For real-time case counts and school closures visit <https://apps.asdk12.org/PTAC/Report/ExternalDashboard>.

## Additional Community Factors

We continue to watch the following community factors which may affect COVID transmission:

- Increased prevalence of more transmissible Variants of Concern, especially the Delta variant.
- Recent increases in vaccination uptake.
- Improper use of non-pharmacologic interventions, including masks, physical distancing, and handwashing.
- Increasing case counts across the state and the country. Processing and accounting for cases is backlogged. Viewing cases dashboard data by onset date rather than report date is more reflective of the actual trajectory of cases (increasing or decreasing).
- Hospitals reporting surge in cases, limited beds available.
- Positive cases are being asked to isolate immediately and notify close contacts, as contact tracing needs have exceed capacity of contact tracing efforts.
- Discussions at the FDA and CDC around booster doses.
- Upcoming flu season.

## Recommendations

*Messaging to the public:*

- **Get vaccinated**
  - As flu season approaches, now is the time to consider getting a flu shot. Per CDC guidance, flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time.
  - Vaccination helps protect you and your family, especially those that are not able to get vaccinated, like children under the age of 12.
  - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) fully approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for individuals 16 years of age and older.
  - The Pfizer vaccine continues to be available under emergency use authorization (EUA) for individuals 12 through 15 years of age
  - [A third dose of an mRNA vaccine \(Pfizer or Moderna\) is recommended](#) for those who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. This recommendation does not include those who received the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine.
  - [A Pfizer booster dose](#) is available to those that received the Pfizer vaccine more than 6 months ago and are:
    - Age 65+

- Residents and staff in long-term care settings
  - Age 18+ and have underlying medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, obesity
  - Age 18+ and work in high-risk setting including healthcare workers, teachers, grocery store workers
- To reduce likelihood of future infection, all eligible persons should be offered COVID-19 vaccine, even those with previous SARS-CoV-2 ([see recently published MMWR](#))
- As per the CDC, [COVID-19 vaccination safe for pregnant people](#).
- **Wear a mask in public indoor settings** if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission ([Anchorage is currently HIGH](#)). [EO 2021-3](#), an emergency ordinance of the Anchorage Municipal Assembly regarding public health and safety measures for the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring masking indoors in most situations, is in effect ([FAQs](#)).
- **Practice physical distancing**
- **Wash your hands** for at least 20 seconds or sanitize your hands frequently
- **Ensure adequate ventilation** and air filtration when indoors. Outdoor air is better.
- **Get tested** ([anchoragecovidtest.org](https://anchoragecovidtest.org)) if you experience [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or are exposed to someone with COVID-19, whether you have had the disease or, are vaccinated or unvaccinated
  - Regular testing in schools, along with COVID-19 vaccination, helps protect students, staff, family members, and others who are not currently vaccinated against COVID-19 or are otherwise at risk for getting seriously sick from COVID-19.
- **Get treatment immediately:** [Monoclonal antibody \(mAb\) treatment](#) is available in Anchorage for individuals ages 12 and older who have recently tested positive for COVID-19 and are at risk for severe illness to prevent severe symptoms and hospitalization. mAbs are most effective within the first three days of getting sick with COVID. Two mAb providers in Anchorage have rapid testing on site to test patients immediately, treat within 30 minutes, and vaccinate if needed: Weka at the Golden Lion Hotel (1000 E 36th Ave) and Fairweather at Tikahtnu Mall (1142 North Muldoon Rd). Contact your medical provider for more information and referral or call the Statewide COVID-19 Helpline at 907-646-3322 and ask for an interpreter immediately if needed.

*Recommendations for local businesses:*

- Encourage and continue to support telework when feasible
- Encourage use of virtual meetings (video- or tele-conference) versus in person meetings when feasible
- Encourage event organizers to consider keeping number of participants small, encourage mask wearing and hosting events outside whenever feasible
- Encourage unvaccinated frontline workers to get tested weekly and anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 to get tested as needed to ensure continuity of critical services
- Consider allowing employees to get tested or vaccinated on work time
- Encourage all employers to review OSHA's [Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)