



Public Health Leadership in Times of Crisis



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hot topics in practice

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FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE


Question for the Viewers

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Rate your level of agreement with the following statement:
"Leaders in my state have been responsive to current public health crises."

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Disagree
- D. Strongly disagree
- E. Neither agree nor disagree
- F. Other (please type in chat)


Lessons from Alaska



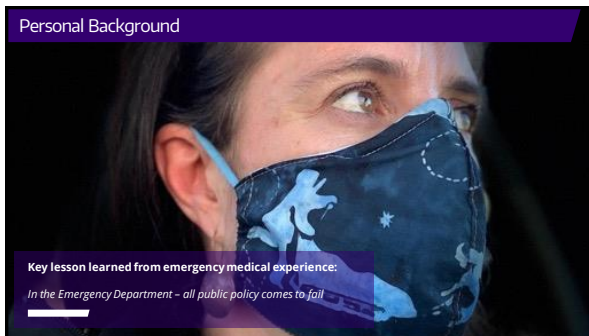
Understanding Health Equity in Leadership

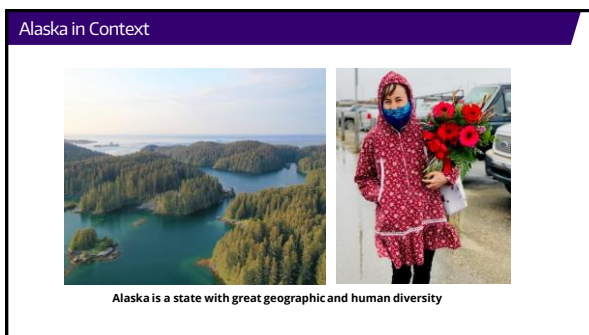


Challenges and Strategies for Leading



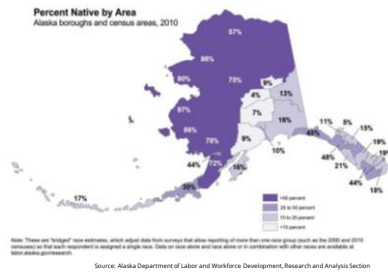




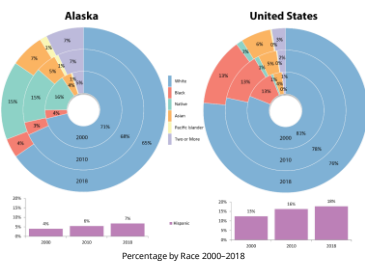


Alaska in Context: Indigenous Communities

- 229 of the 566 federally recognized tribes are in Alaska
- 1/5th of population is Alaska Native
- Villages range from 12-3,000 residents



Alaska in Context: State Demographics



Alaska in Context: Geography

- Larger than combined area of next 3 largest states: Texas, California, and Montana
- Least densely populated state, home to 229 remote villages
- "Remoteness" by Access
 - Small plane: 60%
 - Jet: 11%
 - Highway and jet: 8%
 - Limited road and small plane: 8%
 - Jet, then small plane: 6%
 - Highway: 3%
 - "Extremely Remote": 3%



Source: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Alaska in Context: Infrastructure

- **90% of communities** off the road system
- Food, gasoline, other necessities are **expensive/in short supply**, residents rely on subsistence hunting
- **At least 75 communities** in Alaska lack any law enforcement presence at all
- **Most villages** lack regular access to police, courts, and related services



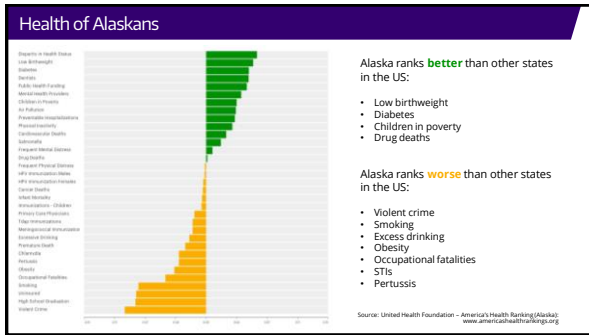
Health of Alaskans

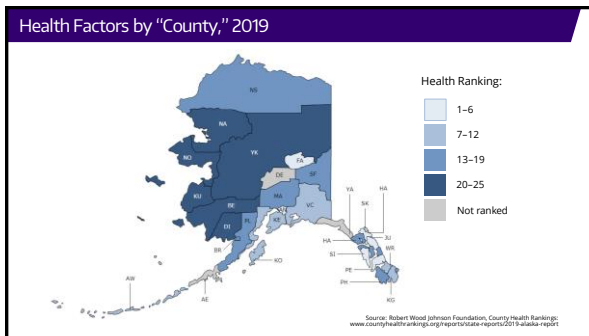
In the Alaskan context, there is a strong connection between health, income, place, and race.

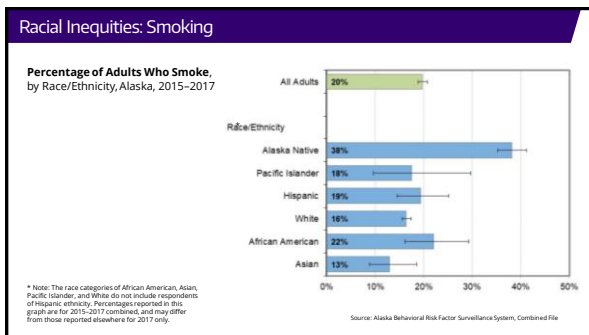


Understanding Health Equity in Leadership





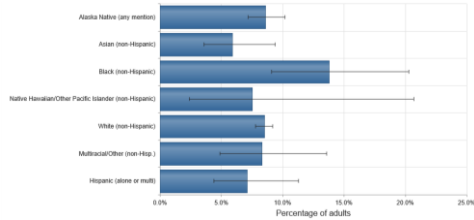




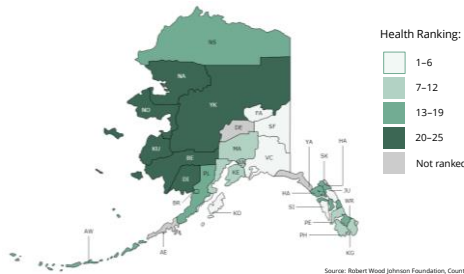
Racial Inequities: Diabetes

Percentage of Alaskan adults (18+) with diabetes
Crude rate by race/ethnicity, 2016–2018 (3-year average)

Source: Alaska BHS, Diabetes Program,
Section of Chronic Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion



Health Outcomes by "County," 2019



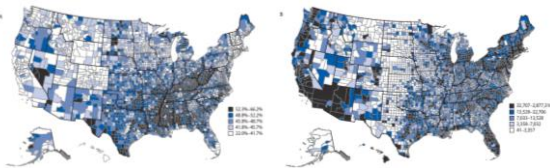
Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings
www.countyhealthrankings.org/report/state-reports/2019-alaska-report

Prevalence of Medically Underlying Conditions

Risk of COVID complications **due to underlying medical conditions**, by:

Percentage of people

Number of people



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/pressroom/pressrels/2020/s0216covid19_risk_factors.html

Historical and Ongoing Systemic Trauma



1918 Influenza Pandemic



Tuberculosis, 1700's - present

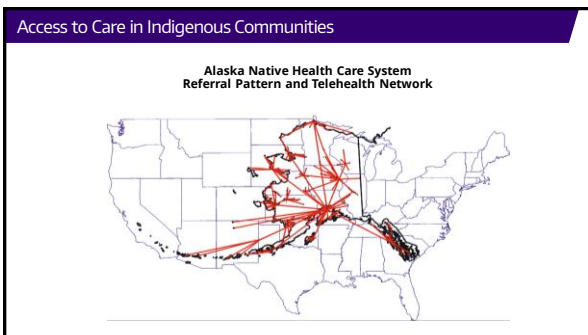




Alaska's Approach to Health Care

Health care is complicated and will always be imperfect, but how we structure our care is the next wave of medical transformation.

Source: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services: <https://alaska.gov>



The Importance of Telehealth



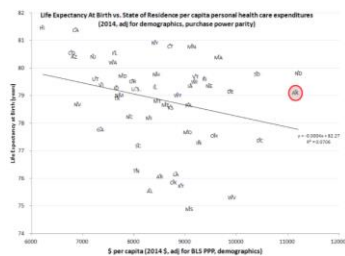
The Role of the Military



Health Care Expenditures and Health Outcomes

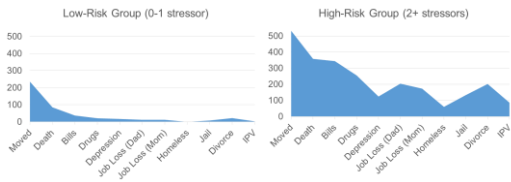
Health Care in Alaska is very expensive

- There is an inverse relationship between personal health care expenditures and life expectancy
- High healthcare costs are often significantly downstream of the cause of a health problem



1115 Behavioral Health Waiver

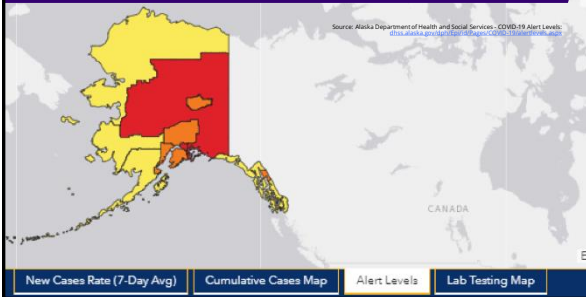
The goal of the project is to provide a vehicle for strengthening the support system for at risk youth and their families to prevent crises and keep families whole and healthy.



Alaska and COVID-19: Vulnerable Communities

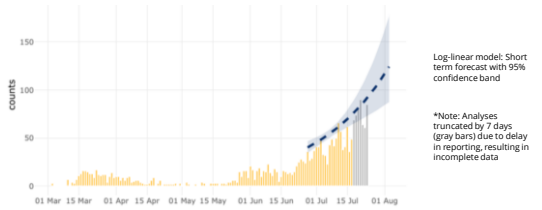


Alaska and COVID-19: Alert Levels by Region



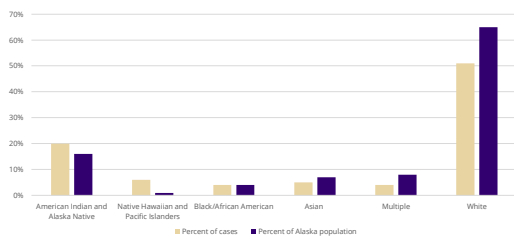
Alaska and COVID-19: Alert Levels by Region

Epidemic curve by onset date, Alaska



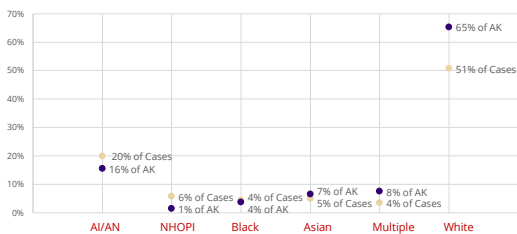
Source: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services - COVID-19 Alert Levels
(<https://www.alaska.gov/health/epidemiology/COVID-19/alert-levels.html>)

Alaska and COVID-19: Total Cases by Race



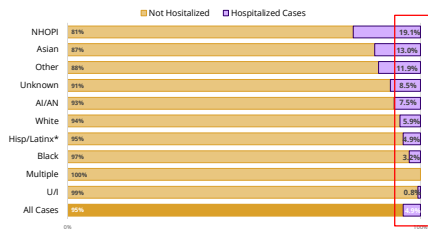
Source: State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health

Does distribution of cases reflect population distribution?



Source: State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Section of Health Analytics and Vital Records

Is severity different by race and ethnicity?



Source - State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Section of Health Analytics and Vital Records

Alaska and COVID-19: Deaths by Race

Race	Hospitalizations		Deaths	
	Number	Percentage	People	Percentage
AIAN	24	21	8	36
Asian	10	9	2	9
Black or African American	2	2	0	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	17	15	1	5
Other Race	5	4	0	0
unknown/blank	11	9	0	0
White	47	41	11	50
Total	116		22	

Source - State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Section of Epidemiology

COVID-19 Inequities in Vulnerable Communities

Racial/ethnic minorities and non-native English speakers:

- Are significantly **more likely** to have a job that didn't allow them to work from home during the "Hunker Down" order
- Have significantly **greater** household size than their counterparts (on average at least 5 members per household).
- Along with people with disabilities, significantly **less likely** to engage in **COVID-19 related risk behaviors** (not wearing a mask, not physical distancing, etc.)
- Reported significantly **higher levels of worry** in terms of **household finances, losing employment, having self or members of their household being infected by coronavirus, and having enough to eat** compared to their counterparts

Source: Unpublished data from Dr. Gabriel Garcia, UAA College of Health Sciences

Additional Challenges



The challenge of being "the little guy"

Additional Challenges



The challenge of getting what is needed

Additional Challenges

The challenges of industry, in particular fisheries and fish processing



Responsive Health Communications

Alaska's health communications campaigns, such as *Mask up, Alaska!*, are inclusive of Alaska's diverse population. Language access is also key in communications.



Responsive Health Communications

Businesses have access to resources like the *COVID Conscious* toolkit to keep employees and customers safe:



Tribal-State Collaboration

Shared leadership between state government and native and tribal communities is critical for Alaska.



Tribal-State Collaboration

Shared decision-making, allocation of resources, data-sharing and communications support Alaska's public health. However, conflicts can arise.



Nalukataq Celebration in Utqiagvik

Tribal – State – Federal Relationships

"Guards work 24 hours a day to keep COVID out of some small Alaska Native villages"

— Sean Maguire, KTUU News

"Alaska's Remote Villages Are Cutting Themselves Off to Avoid Even 'One Single Case' of Coronavirus"

— TIME Magazine

"Alaska tribes facing food supply restrictions during pandemic seek to hunt out of season"

— Anchorage Daily News

"In Alaska town, calls to shut down fishing season amid coronavirus fears"

— The Washington Post

Key Takeaways on Leadership

In the face of Alaska's ongoing challenges, I strive to:

- ✓ Be clear with my role
- ✓ Follow data and science
- ✓ Practice humility
- ✓ Exercise honesty
- ✓ Remove the noise
- ✓ Seek partnership



Dr. Zink's wood stove heated office yurt, behind her family home outside of Anchorage.

Panel Discussion with Dr. Robert Onders



Ann Zink



Robert Onders

QUESTIONS?



To ask a question, please click the  icon in the Zoom toolbar to open your Q&A Pod.

Resources

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)

Preparing Tribal Health partners and medical professionals for COVID-19
anthc.org/covid19/covid19readiness/

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

Alaska's 1115 Behavioral Health Waiver
dhss.alaska.gov/dbh/Pages/1115/default.aspx

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

COVID Conscious Business Toolkit
dhss.alaska.gov/dph/epi/id/pages/COVID-19/business.aspx

For additional resources, please visit our training page:

www.nwcph.org/training/public-health-leadership-during-crisis
