



LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISASTER DECLARATION CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization formally declared the COVID-19 crisis a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, transmission rates of COVID-19 in other parts of the United States appear to have peaked following a recent surge related to the highly contagious SARS-CoV- 2 delta variant; and

WHEREAS, transmission rates of COVID-19 in Alaska have not yet peaked and continue to rise, with record numbers of new cases being reported statewide each day; and

WHEREAS, Providence Anchorage Medical Center has publicly stated the number and severity of patients hospitalized due to COVID-19 now exceeds their resources and their ability to staff beds with skilled caregivers to the point they are now forced to implement crisis standards of care; and

WHEREAS, availability of hospital resources in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the greater Pacific Northwest, may impact the ability of Providence Valdez Medical Center to transfer critical patients suffering from not just COVID-19 but all types of serious illness or injury, for more specialized, potentially life-saving care; and

WHEREAS, Providence Valdez Medical Center is currently experiencing serious challenges in recruitment and retention of staff due to caregiver burnout, employee absences from exposure or illness, and difficulty recruiting high-demand traveling nursing staff; and

WHEREAS, the Alaskan medical community has asked for the general public's help over the next four weeks to reduce COVID-19 transmission rates in Alaska and thereby reduce the impact on healthcare facility operations; and

WHEREAS, Valdez has experienced record numbers of COVID-19 infections in our community over the past six weeks, with the highest number of total active cases to date (77) recorded on Friday, September 24, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our local healthcare system may require additional personnel or resources to protect public health, safety and welfare; and

WHEREAS, under AS 26.23.140, Valdez Charter 3.4(e) and Title 2, Chapter 2.80.045 of the Valdez Municipal Code, only the Mayor may formally declare a disaster declaration; and

WHEREAS, under Title 9, Chapter 9.36.060, the mayor or the city council may issue emergency mandates to protect public peace, health, safety, or general welfare **during a declared emergency** as permitted by law.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Sharon Scheidt, the Mayor of Valdez, Alaska do hereby declare that:

Section 1. A local disaster emergency, as defined by Alaska Statutes and Valdez Municipal Code, does exist within the City of Valdez due to the impacts from the pandemic on our local hospital and the ability of healthcare providers to care for the sick and injured.

Section 2. We request the Governor of Alaska provide state level assistance to the city to meet the public safety and welfare needs arising from or incidental to the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to, supplementation of caregivers, nursing staff, and other personnel to assist Providence

Valdez Medical Center, continued provision of COVID-19 testing supplies and support from the state laboratory, and continued provision of COVID-19 vaccinations.

Section 3. Any new local public health mandate established by the Valdez City Council pursuant to this disaster declaration must be consistent with federal, state, and local public health official recommendations.

Section 4. During the existence of the local disaster emergency, the City Manager shall exercise those powers, functions, and duties prescribed to them in Alaska Statutes, the City Charter, Valdez Municipal Code, and all applicable ordinances, resolutions, proclamations, public health mandates, and those portions of the City Emergency Operations Plan necessary to minimize the effects of said disaster emergency.

Section 5. In accordance with AS 26.23.140 and Valdez Municipal Code 2.80.045, this declaration shall expire in seven days unless otherwise rescinded or extended by a majority vote of Valdez City Council. It is the intention of Valdez City Council to extend this local government disaster declaration during a special meeting scheduled on September 30, 2021.

Section 6. The benchmark for revisiting or rescinding this declaration will be when the Providence Alaska medical system is no longer operating under crisis standards of care.

DATED this 29th day of September, 2021.

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA



Sharon Scheidt, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sheri L. Pierce, MMC, City Clerk

