



## Petersburg Medical Center

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November 24, 2020

Dear Steve Giesbrecht:

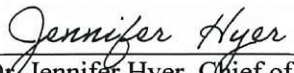
Alaska cases of COVID-19 have grown significantly in the past few weeks. Over 400 cases per day is becoming the norm, with several days over 600. This rise in cases impacts health care facilities across the state and outbreaks (clusters of 5 or more) have been identified in several residential care facilities in our state (both LTC and Assisted Living).

In Petersburg, we have been extremely fortunate to have very few cases relative to our population. More than half of the cases have been either asymptomatic or displayed very mild symptoms. Testing travelers, aggressively testing symptomatic community members and essential workers play a big part in our overall prevention strategy. Another strategy is testing essential workers who do not have symptoms. This allows us to isolate people early so the virus is not unknowingly spread to others. There are many residents in our care and in yours with chronic medical conditions such as lung disease, diabetes, or high blood pressure. We know these people may have a much harder time recovering from COVID-19 and may need hospitalization or even a higher level of care than we are able to offer in Petersburg. Because the cases have grown so rapidly in Alaska, CMS requires long term care facilities to asymptotically test all staff working in LTC on a weekly basis. On August 24, 2020, The State of Alaska DHSS issued recommendations for congregate residential settings. Please review this guidance and take into consideration our request to test all your employees on a regular basis for asymptomatic carriage of COVID-19. Our duty to protect our patients includes the residents of MVM Assisted Living and Senior Housing.

It continues to be very important to take the precautions that keep you and those around you safe: safely distance from people, wear a mask to protect yourself and those around you and wash your hands frequently. Testing is another tool to prevent spread to those who depend on us for their care.

State of Alaska: [http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/SiteAssets/Pages/HumanCoV/COVID-19\\_Guidance\\_congregateResidentialsettings.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/SiteAssets/Pages/HumanCoV/COVID-19_Guidance_congregateResidentialsettings.pdf)

Sincerely,

  
Dr. Jennifer Hyer, Chief of Staff  
Petersburg Medical Center