

Adam Crum
Commissioner

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Department of Health
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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Flight carrying U.S. citizens from Wuhan has departed Anchorage; all passengers continued on to California

January 29, 2020 ANCHORAGE – Health screenings have been completed on the 201 passengers from Wuhan, China, who were onboard a flight that stopped in Anchorage to refuel. A minor injury that happened prior to boarding the airplane in Wuhan received medical attention by personnel who were prepared to care for passengers in the North Terminal at the Ted Stevens International Airport where the airplane landed.

All passengers had already been through two screenings in China and were monitored during the flight. In Anchorage, all passengers were screened twice more and approved to continue on to California by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In California, they will undergo additional health screenings and finish the repatriation process.

“For many of us directly involved, this has been a moving and uplifting experience,” said Alaska’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anne Zink. “The whole plane erupted in cheers when the crew said, ‘Welcome home to the United States.’ It is easy to stay focused on all that we had to do in a short period of time to prepare and respond, but at the end of the day, this mission was about people. It was about American citizens, some of whom were working to serve our country. It was about families, and it was about helping each other in a time of need.”

Health officials in California are working diligently with the CDC and other partners to prepare for the passengers to arrive in California, where they will be re-screened and temporarily housed for a period of time.

“This is the best possible outcome,” added DHSS Commissioner Adam Crum. “We wish these passengers the best of luck as they complete their journeys home and I am deeply grateful to everyone who came together to assist us in helping with this repatriation effort.”

“Alaska is proud to do its part in helping our fellow Americans come home safely,” said Governor Mike Dunleavy. “The pre-screening in China and the re-screening here in Anchorage were critical steps for assuring the safety of the passengers onboard the aircraft and for preventing further importation of the novel coronavirus domestically. For our fellow Americans on the airplane, we wish them Godspeed as they head to California and ultimately to their homes. Going forward, I urge all Alaskans to do their part by diligently following the public health recommendations provided by our DHSS experts as well as the CDC.”

As the number of cases of novel coronavirus continue to rise internationally, DHSS will continue to work with our federal, Tribal, and local health partners in Alaska to rapidly detect and respond to suspected cases.

Good hygiene is vital for preventing the spread of respiratory infections. This includes:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is also a good option if soap and water are not readily available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Stay home when you are sick.

For more information about this novel coronavirus:

- CDC: [2019 Novel Coronavirus Situation Summary](#) (for the latest CDC information on this outbreak)
- CDC: [Traveler's Health](#) (a good reference to check before you travel anywhere)
- DHSS: [Human Coronavirus](#) (DHSS webpage for Alaska-specific information)

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