



May 21, 2020

COVID-19 Survey in the Municipality of Anchorage: Highlights

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Background

As of May 20, 2020, 206 of the 402 identified cases of COVID-19 statewide have occurred among Anchorage residents (51%). Between May 6-10, 2020, approximately 56 days since the first case of COVID-19 in Anchorage was announced, a representative sample of 996 adults in the Municipality of Anchorage completed a cell phone survey designed to assess knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and behaviors related to the epidemic locally. This is a brief summary of highlights, and a detailed report will follow.

Key Findings

PERCEIVED THREAT OF COVID-19

- More than half (57%) felt that COVID-19 was a serious threat to public health in Alaska.
- More than half (58%) felt that COVID-19 was a serious threat to public health in Anchorage.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Most (86%) didn't visit friends the day before the survey.
- Most (81%) did not receive visitors.
- Most (83%) didn't have any physical contact with people not in their household.

83%



did not have
physical contact with
anyone outside their
household

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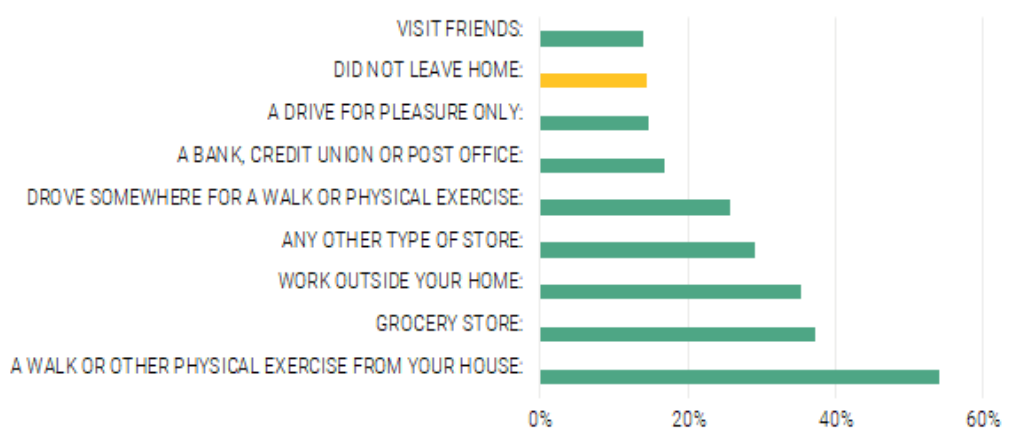
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Where did people go when they went out?

- Over a third (37.3%) of people who left their home went to a grocery store the day before the survey.
- Over a third (35.2%) of people who left their home went to work the day before the survey.



54% 
Of respondents who left their home went for a walk or did other physical exercise

HYGIENE

3 IN 4
PEOPLE
ARE **HANDWASHING MORE**
TODAY VERSUS BEFORE
THE OUTBREAK

- Three in four (75%) are washing their hands more than before the outbreak.

2 IN 3
PEOPLE
WHO WENT OUTSIDE
THEIR HOME **WORE A**
MASK MOST OR ALL OF
THE TIME THEY WERE OUT

- Two in three (67%) who went outside their home wore a mask most or all of the time they were out

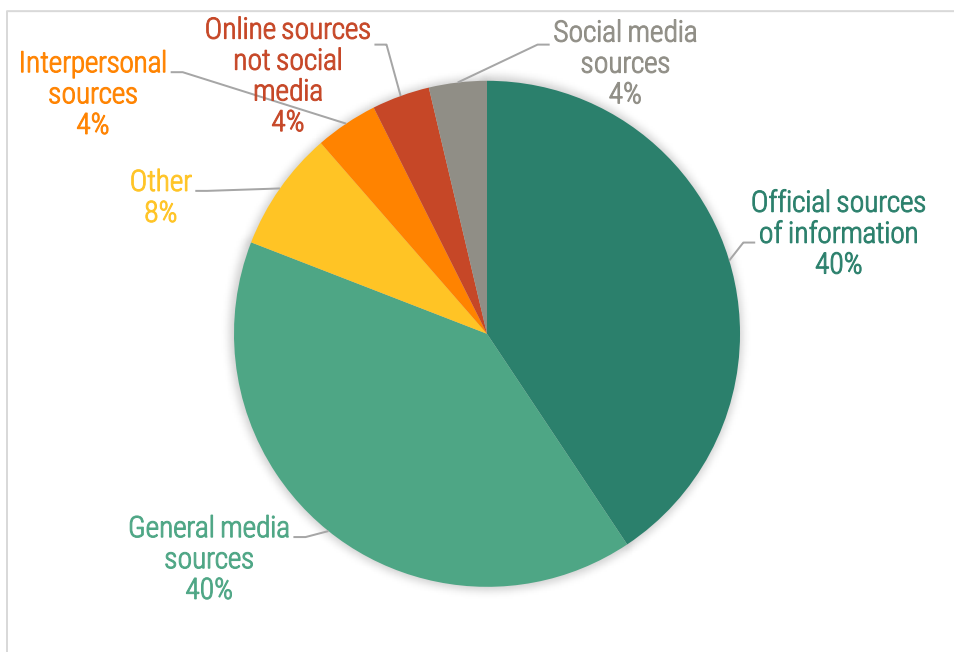


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MENTAL HEALTH

- Worry is generally low among Anchorage residents.
 - Two in three (68%) were not worried or slightly worried about their finances due to COVID-19.
 - Three in four (74%) were not worried, or slightly worried, about losing employment due to COVID-19.
- The level of morale in households is moderately high among Anchorage residents.
 - Almost all (90%) felt their household morale was good or very good (5 or greater on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is very bad and 10 is very good).
- The level of stress/anxiety among Anchorage residents in their household is generally low.
 - Almost 70% report having low or moderate stress in their household (5 or less on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not stressed and 10 is very stressed).

SOURCES OF TRUSTED INFORMATION



Most Anchorage residents (77%) report that their primary source of trusted information related to COVID-19 came from official sources (i.e., state, municipality, and international) or general media sources that did not have a political bias.

MUNICIPALITY'S RESPONSE

- Almost all (87%) felt that the municipality's response to COVID-19 was good to very good.

AREAS OF CONCERN

- Women, racial/ethnic minorities, and those from low socio-economic statuses had slightly higher levels of worry and stress/anxiety compared to their counterparts.
- Men with less education, younger people, people with more than two in their households, and people who had children were more likely to engage in risk behaviors related to potential COVID-19 transmission or infection (such

as having a visitor at home, physical contact with someone outside their household, within 6 feet of someone outside their household, touched things others may have touched, and/or did not wear mask when outside).

- There was an inverse relationship between risk behaviors related to potential COVID-19 transmission or infection and levels of worry, stress, and perceived threat of the virus; suggestion that the more individuals are worried, stressed, or perceived coronavirus as a threat, the more likely they were to avoid risky behaviors.

Recommendations

Fact based risk communication strategies enabling appropriate perceptions of continued threat from COVID-19 during this pre-vaccination period will reinforce individual risk reduction behaviors that lower transmission and community spread. Given the data, messaging related to the next phase should focus on continued personal responsibility to reduce risk. To help guide personal responsibility behaviors, one recommendation is to ground the messaging in the Alaska context, while incorporating CDC and state guidelines. Our COVID-19 numbers are low compared to the rest of the country because of our isolation and because Alaskans have done the right things. We have created an infographic (next page)⁹ outlining key messages related to the importance of **SPACE**. Messaging can focus on these aspects:

- The virus is still with us and the pandemic has not passed.
Our collective behaviors today -- and our willingness to give each other SPACE -- determine Anchorage and Alaska's future.
- Let's all remember to give each other SPACE as we continue to reopen our economy. Doing so will save lives and our way of life.
- SPACE can mean the difference of whether we manage the virus or the virus manages us.
- Alaskans are healthier with SPACE.

In addition to messaging related to personal responsibility behaviors, messaging on the temporal nature of changes related to the virus should be maintained. While overall mental health and morale in the Municipality are good, it's important to keep vulnerable populations in mind. Referencing a "new normal" implies permanence, which can be quite hard for those experiencing great difficulty. The idea that the current situation is permanent will hinder recovery. Instead, messages related to the temporary nature of the current situation will help individuals cope, accept and adapt. It's unknown how many of these behaviors and changes will ultimately become permanent or part of the norm. It's best to refer to "changes" and what Alaskans need to do now to be responsible and reduce risk. One of those ways is to continue to give each other SPACE.

Conclusions

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, most Anchorage residents have practiced physical distancing and good hygiene. Household morale is moderately high, and levels of stress and worry are generally low. As Alaska and Anchorage businesses begin to open, the community should be reminded to give each other SPACE to continue to prevent further transmission of COVID-19. This document is a brief summary of survey highlights, while a full report will be provided to the Municipality. In the next few months, a series of surveys with a panel of Anchorage residents will be conducted to track changes in behavior, perceptions of COVID-19, and mental health as the situation continues to change.

⁹https://www.canva.com/design/DAD82QIkjLE/4Glc9VpSFgn_IYN42CBAcg/view?utm_content=DAD82QIkjLE&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=homepage_design_menu

We need **SPACE** to manage the virus

S

SOCIAL DISTANCE

Stay at least **6** feet away from others who are not part of your household. Stay home and get tested if sick.

P

PRACTICE KINDNESS

A

AVOID CROWDED, ENCLOSED, OR POORLY VENTILATED PLACES

C

COVER WITH MASKS



E

ENGAGE IN FREQUENT HANDWASHING

And cleaning and sanitizing of frequently touched surfaces