



For Immediate Release

Monday, July 6, 2020

Alaska CHARR's Response to MOA Release of Hospitality Business Names with COVID-19 Exposures

Last Friday, the Anchorage Health Department (AHD) released a list of establishments where “persons who were infectious with COVID-19 spent extended time”. Alaska CHARR finds it extremely concerning that to date, the only business types listed are those in the hospitality industry – namely bars and restaurants. It appears as if one industry – arguably that which has been most devastated by this pandemic – is being unfairly targeted, at a time when public exposure is occurring in many other types of establishments, settings, and public gatherings.

Additionally, at least one business on the list reported that no advance contact or notice was made before the list was distributed to the public.

Alaska CHARR has worked with State and local officials throughout the entirety of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that the hospitality industry is part of the solution to ending both the economic and public health crises. Last week, we teamed up with Anchorage business leaders and AHD to develop and release a [recommended list of voluntary measures](#) for hospitality members to continue practicing and/or consider implementing in order to help prevent transmission of the virus and a second shutdown of the industry. We are proud to report that many of the thousands of hospitality establishments around Alaska have already voluntarily implemented those procedures that are applicable to their businesses.

Hospitality is an integral part of the Anchorage and Alaska economies, and it is vital that our respective government and health officials continue to work proactively and collaboratively with us and other business leaders to develop and promulgate consistent, effective solutions that will protect the health of our people, communities, and businesses. At minimum, the following steps should immediately be taken by the AHD and all applicable local and state government entities:

1. **Equal treatment.** If a government chooses to release the names of establishments where confirmed public exposure took place, then the names of all businesses where exposure occurred should be released, not just those of a single industry.
2. **Immediate notification to business owners.** The business owner needs to be directly (when possible) and immediately notified – prior to public release – by the health department when confirmed exposure is reported at an establishment. This gives the business an opportunity to act swiftly and assist the health department before it is inundated with calls from concerned public.
3. **Consistent procedures.** Procedures for how to handle, notify, and report public exposure in an establishment need to be developed and consistently executed to improve efficiency and provide clear expectations of businesses and the public.
4. **More information.** Businesses and the public need more information to understand what is being reported to them, including what the numbers associated with businesses mean – what constitutes an instance of “public exposure” and what doesn’t? What are the expectations of the business and the public when confirmed public exposure occurs at an establishment?



5. **Support for proactive businesses.** Consideration needs to be given to any proactive and reactive measures procedures being followed by each individual business, including adherence to the [Alaska Hospitality Promise](#), enforcement of added mitigation procedures above those in current health mandates, and cooperation with public health officials when cases are reported in their establishments.
6. **Additional funding for contact tracing and testing.** Funding from the federal CARES Act dollars needs to be used toward additional staff and resources for local and state health departments, specifically for the purposes of conducting contact tracing and improving testing. This should be a top priority for governments. Alaska is different than other states like Texas and Florida who have shut sectors of their industries back down due to their lack of resources for contact tracing; with relatively minimal investment of CARES Act funds, Alaska has the ability to handle this on a case-by-case basis and allow businesses to remain open.

“The hospitality industry is certainly willing to do our part – in the interests of economic recovery and public health and safety, many of us have been doing far more than is currently required,” said Alaska CHARR President & CEO Sarah Oates. “Through my daily communications with AHD, I have learned that many of our requests are already in the works, and I hope to see results this week. But it is also important for everyone to remember that this is a community effort. Any time you physically interact with others or enter a public place – not just a bar or restaurant – you are taking a risk. The best way the public can support businesses and your communities is to make safe, responsible, and thoughtful decisions as a patron. Please do your part so that we can remain open to serve you for years to come.”

About Alaska CHARR

The Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailers Association is a nonprofit corporation, dedicated to serving the needs of the hospitality industry in the state of Alaska since 1964. The Association provides training programs, membership services, legislative and government relations, and informational services, and promotes the industry for its members. For additional COVID-19 information and resources pertaining to the Alaska hospitality industry, visit www.alaskacharr.com/coronavirus-and-hospitality. For additional information about Alaska CHARR, please visit www.alaskacharr.com.

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Special Note: Individual media requests for additional statements and/or interviews on this matter are not being taken at this time.

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