Introduction
The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Alaska museums faced with managing a community health emergency, like a pandemic flu outbreak. These guidelines were created by a group of Alaska museum professionals in consultation with protocols established for libraries, businesses, and communities. They offer suggestions for the specific needs of museums but are not intended to replace community emergency plans or the direction of health and security professionals.

Phase 1: Preparation for a Community Health Emergency
- Monitor state and local surveillance of health emergency indicators daily, and community responses, so your organization can respond quickly to circumstances and needs.
- Remind staff and visitors to wash their hands regularly, for 20 seconds with soap and hot water: before / after eating, on reentering the facility, after using the restroom, after coughing or sneezing.
  - Add hand washing reminders to all restrooms and to staff break areas.
  - Make hand sanitizer available in a public and workspaces.
  - Provide a box of tissue at each staff desk.
- Promote social distancing among staff and patrons.
  - Refrain from hand shaking and hugging.
  - Where possible maintain a three foot distance from others.
  - Limit group meetings—use teleconferencing where possible.
- Stockpile essential cleaning supplies—nitrile gloves, alcohol based wipes, cleaning sprays, hand sanitizer, liquid hand soap, paper towels.
- Clean museum spaces carefully and regularly, as visitation demands. Cleaning fluids with at least 60% alcohol are inexpensive and effective. Note that ethanol damages plastics.
  - As possible, remove touchable items from galleries - e.g., children’s toys.
  - Clean with disposable paper towels rather than towels or sponges.
  - Wipe down counters, cases, door handles, banisters, railings, faucets, handles, phones, keyboards, interactive video screens, non-portable touchable items, etc. at least daily.
  - Enforce museum policies re: personal clean up (dishes, garbage).
  - Discuss any additional cleaning needs with janitorial service.
- Develop an emergency staffing plan
  - Require staff members to stay home if they are sick or if they are caring for a sick family member.
  - Determine which staff may work from home, on which projects, and for how many hours.
  - Determine what museum property staff may need to work from home and what will be allowed to leave the facility (e.g., computer, reference books, files, etc.), and how staff will be called upon to address museum needs.
  - Determine which staff cannot work from home and
    - Under what conditions staff will be allowed to work in the facility (e.g., reduced or staggered hours for staff, physical distancing measures).
    - Under what conditions staff will be furloughed.
COMMUNITY HEALTH EMERGENCY CHECKLIST FOR MUSEUMS

- Determine who will be responsible for ensuring the museum’s core security and collections care functions are maintained, and how.
  - Create a check list of items to review on each museum visit and a log to document those visits.
  - Cross train at least one other staff members to complete visits if needed.
- Adjust sick leave and unpaid leave policies to support the possibility of an extended closure that are consistent with public health recommendations.
- Examine planned staff travel and under what circumstances it will be permitted or canceled (e.g., attending conferences and trainings, traveling to teach).
- Communicate with contractors who provide services (e.g., janitorial) about keeping sick employees at home.

- Assign a staff member to coordinate and communicate the organization’s response to a community health emergency. This person will be the point of contact with local emergency managers.
- Consider the status of upcoming loans (incoming and outgoing) for both the safety of patrons and the proper care of museum collections and property.
- Consider the status of ordered equipment, supplies, and merchandise and whether orders should be temporarily suspended.
- Consider the economic impact of a community health emergency on your annual budget—including admission revenue, store sales, program revenue.

Phase 2: During a Community Health Emergency

- Close to the public
  - Follow the local guidelines for closing businesses / organizations. For example, consider closing to the public if your community school district closes schools.
  - Shut down gallery, cancel scheduled programs, and suspend planned outgoing / incoming loans (e.g., traveling exhibits, educational boxes, teaching collections, library materials).
  - Communicate closures on signage, website, social media, voice mail, and email and include interim contact information (e.g., staff email).
  - Implement staffing plan.
  - Contact contractors who access the space - e.g., janitorial - to suspend service temporarily.
  - Contact grantors to explain the situation and initiate communication over potentially stalled projects, reports, etc.
  - Contact borrowers (traveling exhibits, educational materials, library book, etc.) to stop materials from being returned when facility is closed.
  - Notify local police of closure and request facility be added to routine patrols.

- Maintain essential collections care functions — security, climate control.
  - Appoint one staff member to complete regular walkthroughs of the facility during closure e.g., once every 48 hours.
- Assist local emergency managers by sharing information with the museum’s audience via digital resources — e.g., social media, website, email broadcast.

Phase 3: After a Community Health Emergency

- Recall staff when local emergency managers indicate that it is safe to reopen.
• Clean facility well before opening to public.
• Notify public for reopening and steps taken to insure a safe, clean museum space, via email, website, social media.
• Notify grantors, borrowers, loaners of reopening and current status of projects and plans to address any missed deadlines.
• Reinitiate suspended loans, orders, etc.
• Complete an after action review and update organizational emergency plan to reflect lessons learned.

References

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Pages/default.aspx

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services — Coronavirus
http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/Human-Coronavirus.aspx

US CDC — Business Response to Coronavirus

City of Kodiak Pandemic Flu Plan