



The following is a statement from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and the Alaska School Activities Association:

DHSS and ASAA would like to alert Alaska school districts to recent changes in the Anchorage area that may affect your past or upcoming decisions related to attending ASAA State Championship Events. Transmission of COVID-19 in the Municipality of Anchorage has significantly increased in the last few weeks. Case rates continue to rise, signaling widespread community transmission.

Travel between communities with lower community transmission rates and Anchorage poses additional health risks to travelers and the communities to which they return.

ASAA's mitigation plan for state competitions aim to reduce the risks associated with travel and gathering for competition, however mitigation of all risk associated with travel and gathering is not possible. ASAA and DHSS caution that the ASAA mitigation plan for competition is only one part of a strong school mitigation plan. Other components that should be addressed when choosing to attend include but are not limited to: methods and complexity of travel, housing, meals and limiting interactions with non-essential people. DHSS is available on request to consult with schools on their mitigation plans, including the travel aspect, and to help schools and districts better clarify the risks associated with travel to their athletes, staff and communities.

ASAA does currently still plan to host all three divisional state cross country races and the state tennis tournament. However, ASAA and DHSS recognizes that when individual districts weigh the risks to their athletes, staff and community, districts may find that the risks of traveling to Anchorage outweigh the benefits. In particular communities that currently experience no or minimal community transmission.

While the decision to attend state events is up to the individual school districts, DHSS and ASAA wanted to convey the current status of the host community for upcoming state events and remind districts that the DHSS school team is available for consultation.