



## MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

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### MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 17, 2021  
TO: Mayor and Assembly  
FROM: Michael Brown, Borough Manager  
RE: Manager's Weekly Post

**West Susitna Access Follow-Up:** As a follow-up to the discussion at the March 16 Assembly meeting, a link is provided below to AIDEA's project site. The site has a few maps, however, the more detailed route maps are included in the Preliminary Engineering Report for Phase 2, which were provided at the meeting. These maps do not identify land ownership along the route. Borough staff will work with AIDEA to see if our GIS department can support adding parcel data with reasonable effort. Otherwise, the mapping of land ownership may be added to the scope for Phase 3. AIDEA is tentatively scheduled to present the Phase 3 scope to the Assembly for consideration at the June 1 regular meeting. <http://www.aidea.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx>

**911 Addressing Follow-Up:** The Manager provided the following update to the Mayor of Wasilla based on a question from the March 16 meeting regarding the time it takes to update addresses for 911 calls for new phone lines. New landline phone requests from the phone company are provided directly to MATCOM Dispatch and are updated in the system within one to three days. Mobile phones provide location data once connected to the cellular network.

**Su-Knik Mitigation Bank Payment:** The Su-Knik Mitigation Bank, which is partnered with the Mat-Su Borough, recently sold 50 credits and distributed \$225,265 to the Borough on March 10, 2021. This included a payment to the long-term stewardship account per our agreement; a \$25,266 payment for the MSB acreage credit; and the Borough's profit distribution of \$199,999.

**Quarterly Employee Health Plan Update:** Employee health benefit costs make up a significant portion of an employer's overall benefit expense. Given this, reviewing health plan usage and costs, engaging and educating employees, and managing plan design is essential.

The Borough is self-insured which provides for more flexibility in plan design and benefits. As a self-insured plan, instead of paying an insurance company to pay medical, dental and vision claims, we pay the claims ourselves, using a third-party administrator (TPA). The TPA processes and pays the claims on our behalf, in accordance the Borough's health plan, and provides data regarding usage and cost. The Borough reviews the health plan cost and usage quarterly and strives to balance the needs of the workforce while managing costs.

*Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community*

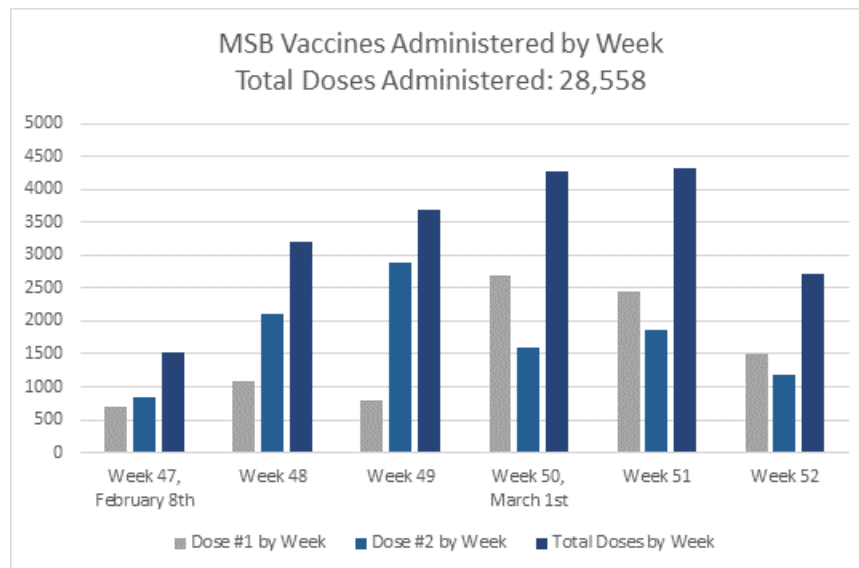
On March 9, 2021 the Borough’s Health Care Committee met to review information from Quarter 1 of the 2020/2021 Plan Year (November 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020). Total net paid claims for this period were \$1,652,970 or \$1,507 per employee per month (PEPM). This was an 18.4% decrease in total claim costs from the full prior plan year (\$1,846 PEPM), which puts our position to expected liability at 74.1%.

Following are highlights from our review and comparison to the same period last year:

- Medical (not including stop loss reimbursement) – 37.7% decrease in gross costs
- Prescription Drugs – 9.6% increase in gross costs
  - Though the number of prescription drugs purchased decreased 5.9%, the cost per claim increased by 21.3%.
  - Utilization of “generic” prescription drugs decreased slightly, and there was an increase in utilization of “brand name” drugs, and an increase in “brand name” drug pricing.
- Dental – 27.6% decrease in gross costs. The decrease in dental costs is attributed to COVID-19.
- Vision – 4.5% decrease in gross costs. The decrease in vision costs is attributed to COVID-19.
- Large Claims (over \$30,000) – 49.9% decrease in total paid. The decrease in large claims paid is attributed to the decrease in the number of large claim.

Many of the cost containment strategies and plan design changes implemented have been instrumental in effectively managing the Borough’s health plan costs. Additional strategies are being considering that will help to mitigate increasing health care costs. If you have any questions regarding the information provided, please contact Sonya Conant, HR Director at (907) 861-8432.

**Vaccination Weekly Update:** Vaccinations upwards of 1,350 are expected to be administered this week at Raven Hall, Fairgrounds.



## **Public Affairs Media Flyover:**

### **Winter Outdoor Safety**

- MSB responds to multiple calls of people and pets in distress on ice  
<https://ktna.org/2021/03/state-and-borough-respond-to-multiple-calls-of-people-and-pets-in-distress-on-area-ice/>

### **Hunting**

- Alaska opens 1<sup>st</sup> raffle for hunting permits to raise funds  
<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/alaska-opens-1st-raffle-hunting-163603106.html>

### **Schools**

- Houston Middle School funding uncertain  
[https://www.frontiersman.com/news/houston-middle-school-funding-uncertain/article\\_ec100296-8246-11eb-a8d5-ab7c001a0e52.html](https://www.frontiersman.com/news/houston-middle-school-funding-uncertain/article_ec100296-8246-11eb-a8d5-ab7c001a0e52.html)

### **COVID-19**

- DHSS Commissioner, Adam Crum, receives first dose of Vaccine at Fairgrounds and talks State and Mat-Su Borough Partnership (VIDEO)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ju7u9-4aGNo>

### **Borough Business**

- Borough considering feasibility of sending septage to Palmer  
[https://www.frontiersman.com/news/borough-to-consider-feasibility-of-sending-septage-to-palmer/article\\_384fdd3c-862c-11eb-9fa2-63ab74e54003.html](https://www.frontiersman.com/news/borough-to-consider-feasibility-of-sending-septage-to-palmer/article_384fdd3c-862c-11eb-9fa2-63ab74e54003.html)
- Assembly Meeting- March 16 (Live Streamed)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WS3PQQNOit4>

### **Health**

- Valley Awareness and Suicide Coalition moves forward  
[https://www.frontiersman.com/news/valley-awareness-and-prevention-for-suicide-coalition-moves-forward/article\\_8ec45b46-8624-11eb-a7ed-3f0ade93ec0f.html](https://www.frontiersman.com/news/valley-awareness-and-prevention-for-suicide-coalition-moves-forward/article_8ec45b46-8624-11eb-a7ed-3f0ade93ec0f.html)

### **Iditarod**

- Dallas Seavey wins No.5  
<https://www.alaskasnewssource.com/2021/03/15/as-a-champion-is-crowned-small-crew-brings-up-rear-of-itarod-pack/>
- ADN photos  
<https://www.adn.com/outdoors-adventure/itarod/2021/03/15/favorite-photos-from-the-2021-itarod/>
- Iditarod timeline  
<https://www.alaskasnewssource.com/2021/03/07/itarod-49-blog-live-updates-from-the-itarod-trail/>

### **Utilities**

- Could Alaska's power grid suffer the same fate as Texas  
[http://www.newsminer.com/news/alaska\\_news/alaskas-power-grid-could-a-texas-sized-crash-happen-here/article\\_79675ba6-8221-11eb-85de-27e5ec36ab7d.html](http://www.newsminer.com/news/alaska_news/alaskas-power-grid-could-a-texas-sized-crash-happen-here/article_79675ba6-8221-11eb-85de-27e5ec36ab7d.html)

### **Mat-Su Infrastructure Improvements**

- Alaska DOT awards \$420 million for infrastructure contracts  
<http://dot.alaska.gov/comm/pressbox/arch2021/PR21-0005.shtml>