# Audio file

[Hugh.mp3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

# [Transcript](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Can you please tell me a little about yourself, your job, your age, educational background, and how long have you lived in Alaska?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[OK, I've lived. I've lived in Alaska for 34 years, since 1990. And I spent most of that time until 2018. As a high school teacher in very rural Alaska and so meaning in, I spent time teaching in small ubic villages. Out on the coast on on the Bering Sea. And then. I think in around 2000 the school district asked me to move into Bethel. Bethel is a a town of 6000, but it's kind of a hub economic and political hub for 56 villages in western Alaska. So I moved into town. And I helped start. An alternative school for like at risk teenagers. And then I. Retired let's say in 2018, and then I started working for. The Department of Corrections, while I was doing adult education in a in a prison, actually it was a jail as a pretrial facility in jail. I did that for four years, and that was during the COVID epidemic, pandemic. And then just recently have moved. Over to a local Community College where I'm doing student advising currently, but I think if the questions are revolving, you know, around vaccine hesitancy. And. And specific to the pandemic, I mean, I was. One of our local physicians called it. I mean, it was a hot zone, you know? And I mean, it was tough.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Sure. And how old are you, if I can ask?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yes.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Could you say that? Again, ohh, how old am I?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yes, I'm 60.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[And so you have a huge experience working with lots of people in different age groups, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Correct.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Uhm, how do you think about social media usage in Alaska in different ages? For example, do people usually use social media a lot, or for example, between young people? Is it so much? Visual to use social media and which social media they use more.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[OK so. Yes, so ohh. Although it's very rural Alaska, you know, we don't have there's. Very rural Alaska, so there's no roads connecting these communities. The only way they get to another community would be by boat. Or small plane. Or snowmobile in the in the winter and. And and and you know the people are in and like a Native American or an indigenous people here. And my wife is. You're picking my children would be mixed. But in terms? Of so, so, but at the same. Time. It's really quite. Is the modern era here too so? There is cell phones and stuff. Now, but there wasn't. 15 years ago, in any event, so so social media, I would say yes, lots of teenagers. Use social media and just like they do in lower 48, what they don't use is Facebook. What they would be using. In my experience, mostly is like Snapchat and TikTok and YouTube. Whereas their parents so middle-aged, middle-aged. Uh. Middle-aged people will really afford primarily, I think use Facebook and maybe YouTube, but primarily Facebook, but YouTube too. And I would say folks, more elderly wouldn't. Use any kind.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[OK, I understand. And let's go about the vaccine hesitancy and after that we will go back again to the social media and its impact. And what do you what are your views on vaccines in general? Not not. Not only COVID vaccine, but also generally about vaccines. What do you think and what do you think about the general views in people? In Alaska, do they think positively about vaccines generally or not?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[My personal opinion is I would I think very positively about vaccines and. I've had my I've had family members who were physicians and. I've always been interested in the science of public health and. And so all of my children are vaccinated and and so I personally think positively about vaccines. And I thought very positive positively about the COVID vaccine vaccine. And. And I, however, and I would say most people. Out here in this area of rural Alaska. Didn't give any thought to childhood vaccines. And and. And you know, 96% of all children were vaccinated, you know. But I would say that during however during COVID. Then, because of online objection to the COVID maccini 1. That spread and more, because I'm also. I'm also on this. I'm on the school board for the local school district, the same school district I had worked for for so many years. And so we were facing this issue as a school school district. But during COVID there did develop a hesitancy towards the vaccine. Among many people, and I think that spread a little bit. Towards childhood vaccination as well. But there definitely was there definitely among. Groups of people's real hesitancy towards the COVID vaccine.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[I see and have you ever seen any people around you or your relatives or their relatives who get the vaccine and had some side effects so that they are afraid of getting COVID vaccine?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah, yeah, especially remember the when they first came out, especially on that first vaccine. You could feel pretty sick after that. I had experienced the same thing actually myself years before with the shingles vaccine. And. I mean, not sick enough to just, you know, you know, feeling, feeling ill, you know, feverish, you know, not sick enough to go to hospital or something. But yeah, I I. Yeah, many people experience some side effects with the first vaccine. I think less with the second most of us were prepared. I was at that time I was working in a jail and many of the staff and inmates we were prepared for that side effect. We knew that was coming. But I think that may. That may have added to the hesitancy, but. I don't think that was the main driver of the hesitancy.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[So what do you think? What is the big or the most important thing about vaccine hesitancy in Alaska? Why? Why I mean for example, in some areas, some religious or cultural beliefs are the most important. Things for vaccine hesitancy is it the same in Alaska or other other factors can make it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Not religious, not in this area of Alaska. That wasn't a concern. UM. It. For among native Alaskans, so that was an indigenous. American. Uh. There were some who? Worried this is amongst the there were some who worried well, the government is experimenting on us.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[The kind of mistrust on government.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[At. Yeah. Oh, yes. The mistrust of government. And and it wasn't. Totally rational. I mean that had. That had never happened. Historically, that had not happened here. But but a mistrust of government for sure. And that would have done. And that would have been for some cultural and political reasons and mistrust of government, for sure that. So that was among some people. Uh. Yeah. And I think that was the main that was the main part of it, mistrust of government and a belief that the government was exaggerating. The problems of COVID.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[I see. And do you think in this environment activities in social media can have a positive influence positive positive effects on this mistrust to the government or not?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[So.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[I I think social media could help positively. With the right kind of. Public relations with the right kind of communication. And this is something I thought a lot about and and so. You know, when we were in the jail, when the when, as each wave of COVID would come through, it was really. Difficult, you know, I mean, we would be short staffed. Many, many inmates were sick. Inmates were getting hospitalized. Luckily, we had a hospital right next door. We had staff who were. Sick and hospitalized. So even though I was doing adult education, I became the nursing assistant. So I was taking vitals of hundreds of inmates, you know, or working in the kitchen because our kitchen. True. Which is made-up of a couple of one or two staff and and then. Inmates were sick. And we have 600 meals a day to put together. So. I'd be working in the kitchen, you know. You know, and the and the nurse, me, me and the nurse were in the in the kitchen. So despite we could see how serious it was. I knew. Staff who really didn't want to get the vaccine. And that had to do with. Sort of, uh. Kind of slightly fringy. Political thing, beliefs that they were developing during during COVID. But anyway, so I do think that social media could be used to help reduce hesitancy. If it's done well, and if it's done correctly.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah, of course. And do you think they should give people some more information or better to ask during COVID didn't see any or did you see anything in the social media that was some kind of misinformation? Or wrong information about COVID or disencouraged people to getting the vaccine or not.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Well, I would say that when. When the. I would say that occasionally. National public health authorities like Doctor Fauci. Occasionally made some mistakes. And and those were amplified. By social media personalities who were opposed. To public health initiatives, I could give you an example I mean. Early on. Doctor fauci. Very, very early on has suggested masks. Surgical grade masks wouldn't be particularly effective. And it later came to light. That this is the only mistake of. His I'm aware. Of it later came to light that he may not actually have believed that, but. He was trying to preserve. The limited surgical masks that were available for for public health authorities, you know, for nurses and doctors. And and. And so people later, who were opposed to public health initiatives. Would hold that up and say. See this guy lies. UM. There are there were the occasional examples of people that even I know, let's say a local public health authority. So a nurse, I would, I mean, I'm sorry, a physician. I was working very closely with at the hospital about how to get vaccines rolled out in the hospital. She had made it. I I think a little. Say. When she was talking to the school board and there were some people opposed, you know, people in the community and opposed to. Public gatherings or masks or something. And she had she had described there's a very rare thing with COVID which happened with children where they could have. I've forgotten the name of it now, but it's very, very rare and could develop. A really bad reaction to COVID, and it's very rare and you know the survival rate for children was very, very high. But there is a very rare thing which did happen. Only the pediatric cases. And she held that up. And don't forget about this. Held that up as a defense about why we should continue with masking and reducing social gatherings, which in fact we did. We continued with that, but she held up this one example. But it was exaggerated because in in fact, there hadn't been any cases of that in Alaska. And and by that date, the CDC had only identified 15 or something nationwide. So while she said Ohh well, COVID noes have this one terrible effect on children. Which it does, but she hadn't pointed out that it will only happen to 15 out of millions of children, you know, around the country. You know what? I mean so so. To me, that was a little mistake. And then people who are opposed to many other things, vaccines and not having school would hold. That up, that mistake. So, so, so potential or possible mistakes that public health authority people made.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Thanks.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[And I don't. I personally, I'm not blaming them because we there's lots of things we didn't know at the time, you know. And we're human. Those later were held up by people opposed to any kind of response to COVID and and that was being shown on social media. So you would see that on YouTube channels and on TikTok and stuff.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[OK. Thank you. About vaccine hesitancy itself, if you want to tell me something about public health system or health care system in Alaska and general people themselves. Which one? Which one is more important? I mean if we want to work on a sector for future in a case, maybe happen pandemic or any kind of disease or any kind of public health issues. If you want to put a priority, which one is more important? Public health sector, we should strengthen this part or general people about their information about their trust, about their communication. What do you think, which one is more important?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[You know, I'm sorry, I didn't quite understand the question. More important in what way?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[I mean for vaccine about vaccine hesitancy, which one has more fault? I mean do you think it's vaccine hesitancy is because of healthcare system or no healthcare system is doing well but? People themselves have some problems in trust, information, education or anything.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Ohh I see. I see. Yeah, that's interesting. It's a great question and that is something I thought a lot about because I did work closely. With the public health authorities in this area, so. They were hoping I would be. Why work closely with them in terms of? Rolling out how to get the vaccine into a jail, how to make that work right for hundreds of inmates and 50 staff. And then I also worked with them because I was on the school board and we worked in our district, worked closely with the hospital. So I. I. I think that the hesitancy at. I think that maybe, like myself and maybe you, I'm guessing might be the rarity. So so if. If public, if the health authorities are discussing something. I'll look at that really closely and I'll look at the CDC report. And I'll look for contrarian opinions, and I'll look at their research and I understand statistics in a basic way, you know, so they can convince me they can convince me. But that's not the general population. The general population, or at least I could see with my family members and people I know who were resistant to the vaccine. UM. What they cared about is what their. Family and friends thought. That's what influenced them. Is that what you're asking so that the hesitancy is more driven by your? Peers for most people.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[I see. And so do you think if we have a? Package of budget to put on people trust and communication. I mean community based activities or put it in a public or health care system in Alaska. Which one do you prefer? You think I have to put this budget? And. People.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Right. I see what you're saying. UM. Well, I I would say putting it into the community or the people somehow I. But although I'm not sure if that can be done effectively. Maybe the only potentially effective way is to give the money to the public health authorities so that they can spend money on social media or something. Yeah, but.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[I see.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah. So but. Yeah, it's a difficult question because.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah, yeah, I I see. I see because it's too easy if if you tell me. Yeah, you have to put the budget on healthcare system. It's too easy because I understand that, OK, maybe they need some more infrastructure. Maybe they need more. Some public staff. Maybe they need some more doctors. Some more. You know, health education. It's too easy. It's too easy to do that. But when when we we are thinking of community based activities. It is more complicated and it takes time and it needs lots of, you know, expertise in social activities and everything. Yeah, that's true. So so you you think that we need more.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Community based activities there.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[That that, assuming that that's actually effective at. At helping people come to a decision. Which the public health authorities want them to come to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah, I see.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[And I don't know if I don't really know if it would be effective.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah. And because you were a teacher and you worked with lots of children and teenagers, especially teenagers, do you think in Alaska if we can work on education on that? And we do some like social experiences. I mean putting some groups of children and teenagers under some educational materials about vaccines. Can it work, do you think? It it will work.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Actually I think it. I think it. I think it can because I've seen that. Happen in. Other areas in this area of Alaska, for instance. So here hunting and fishing. Hmm. Is extremely important to people's livelihood, so here and we would call that subsistence so. So in subsistence is held up as a really important cultural thing. It's. I'm not talking about being. Subsistence farmer in rural China, so don't use that connotation for subsistence, but subsistence as people living their culture and living their life, which is based around hunting and fishing and providing. So that's really important. So when when the state or the federal government wants to. To restrict a certain kind of subsistence hunting that doesn't go over well. So. But I have seen both the state and the federal government. When they're trying to. Decrease the the amount of hunting on a certain kind of goose because that population so low. Do. Kind of a public outreach campaign, which which is both for adults and children or and teenagers and children in the schools, you know, making calendars. Describing why it's important to to eat other birds and not that bird and and so working with the school districts with a little bit of curriculum material and over time. And I mean over 10 or 20 years. That can be effective. I've seen it be effective.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Where it takes lots of time.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[But a long time and you could never prove that's the kind of thing and you know, in social sciences, it's hard to prove anything. And you can never really prove that it was effective because of the activities that they had put into the schools. Maybe maybe the change in in hunting behavior was for another.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah, of course it's a challenge.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[OK. Thank you very much. And is there anything you would like to add or share about your experiences of vaccine hesitancy, what you saw around you or especially about the impacts of social media or? Education on this hesitancy in Alaska.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah, one thing. So I I do think that. When health authorities should not be shy. To say, hey, you know what? There's something we don't know, but this is what we think. And here, here are the reasons we. Think this. Though when they don't know it, it may be in an effort that I think sometimes, maybe in an effort to simplify things. They would. They weren't both national and state authorities weren't clear about what we didn't know for sure. And I think that's a mistake. I think if we don't know something for sure, we say that. I'm not. We're not sure about this, but here are the reasons we think that this is a good idea. To do this. You know, I mean, so no one should. No one should ever have said. I don't know if anyone ever did, but no one should ever have said masks or 100% effective because they're obviously. Not 100% effective. But we should say they're mostly effective in this kind of situation, you know. That you know and just be really, really honest about stuff, about what we don't know. And I do think it helps because again. If people, for whatever reason. Don't. I mean, I don't I I don't always trust that everything the government does is correct. I mean, cause not everything the government does is correct, right. Makes mistakes, is made-up of human beings. So it it. I think it does help to have sort of influencers like in the way that. So in a in a local community, if there are people that are respected and are known. To the public at large and they say, hey, look, I decided to get a vaccine for me and my kids. That's helpful. In fact, I did that. They asked me to do that. And and and other people out here on this area of Alaska, they said that the hospital would say, would you mind if we let everyone you know took a picture of you and your kids getting? Your shots you. Know and I think that that could. That taps into the. Most people really who they trust are kind of. The people around them. Right. Not, not, not. Not the not the infectious disease specialist at the hospital. Who they might respect and know kind of. But you know what I mean. You respect your your neighbor. Yeah. Or I don't know. You. You you'll believe your neighbor you. No. So yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Or maybe some people, for example in tribal communities, some leaders, or some important people who most of people trust them.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Yeah, that's exactly. That's exactly exactly what I mean. So this is, you can consider this being a tribal community and and so. So yes, that that's what I mean.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[I see. I understand. Thank you so much for your time and I appreciate it. I don't know if you if you we have your phone number and your e-mail of course if you just send me your phone number too so that I can share with our. The financial part, they can pay you and thank you so much.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[OK, I'd be. Happy to do that. Thank you very much.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Thank you. Have a good day. Bye.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)

[Bye bye.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ABaWM2KXgqSGqRU)