

Press Release

Macon County Public Health Identifies a COVID-19 Outbreak

Macon County Public Health has identified a COVID-19 outbreak in staff and residents at Drake Cottage, a congregate living facility. Four individuals have tested positive for COVID-19. All positive patients are being isolated and are doing well. Drake Cottage has been following the highest levels of Personal Protective Equipment standards while in their facility and especially when working with residents.

All the residents and staff of Drake Cottage have been tested for COVID-19 at the direction MCPH's Medical Director and Drake Cottage. All results have been received, and all residents and staff will be tested again later in the week. Drake Cottage and Macon County Public Health are working together and have verified that Drake Cottage has all the necessary PPE, sanitizing, and monitoring supplies and guidance they need to assure that any spread is minimal.

In addition to Drake Cottage staff and residents, MCPH is working to identify any additional close contacts of these individuals. The CDC defines close contact as being within approximately 6 feet of a person with an infection with COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time of 10 minutes or longer. Based on information provided by the individual, county health officials will assess risks of exposure, determine which if any additional measures are needed such as temperature and symptom checks, quarantine and/or testing.

The entire state of North Carolina is under a "Safer at Home" executive order, currently under phase two. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19; however, anyone of any age can become infected with this illness. Therefore, we ask that community members **strictly follow** the governor's orders and continue to practice **social distancing**, as well as safe hygiene measures such as hand washing and frequently cleaning touched objects and surfaces. The public can monitor the different phases of re-opening and learn more about the restrictions at <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance>.

It is important to make sure the information you are getting about COVID-19 is coming directly from reliable sources. For more information, please visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus and NCDHHS' website at www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus, which also includes future positive COVID-19 test results in North Carolina.

MCPH regularly updates our Facebook page with accurate and current information regarding COVID-19; we encourage the public to check our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/MaconPublicHealth for up-to-date information.

Symptoms for COVID-19 are fever, cough, other lower respiratory illness (shortness of breath). If you believe that you may have COVID-19, please call the Health Department at 828-349-2517. The call center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am – 5:00pm, until further notice.

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