



Press Release

Macon County Public Health Identifies COVID-19 Outbreak

Macon County Public Health has identified a COVID-19 outbreak at Macon Valley. Thirteen residents and four staff members have tested positive for COVID-19. All patients who have tested positive are doing well and are isolated from others. Staff who have tested positive will not return to work until they are no longer infectious.

All the residents and staff of Macon Valley have been notified of their exposure and are recommended to be tested for COVID-19 at the direction MCPH's Medical Director and the facility's leadership team, and plans are in place to isolate any other individuals, should there be a positive result. Macon Valley and Macon County Public Health have been working together and have verified that both facilities have all the necessary PPE, sanitizing, and monitoring supplies and guidance they need to assure that any spread is minimal.

In addition to 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 15 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.

Macon Valley will be closed to visitors to slow the risk of spread within the facility and to the community. All residents and staff of both facilities have been tested and are awaiting results. All residents and staff will be tested every week until there are two consecutive weeks of all negative results. When two consecutive weeks of negative results for all come back, then facilities can begin to allow minimal visitation again.

The entire state of North Carolina is under a "Safer at Home" executive order, currently under phase three with masks required to be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained. 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.

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 8:30am – 4:00pm, closing daily for lunch from 12:00pm – 1:00pm, until further notice.

###