March 22, 2020

Buncombe County Announces Additional COVID-19 Infections in Buncombe Residents

Buncombe County Health and Human Services (BCHHS) has identified additional cases of the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in Buncombe County residents. These additional cases mean that there are now three known cases of COVID-19 in Buncombe County residents and one COVID-19 case associated with a traveler to Buncombe County.

First COVID-19 Case Associated with Buncombe County:

The individual, a resident of New York State, visited Asheville March 10-13, 2020, at which time they developed symptoms of COVID-19. They were tested by BCHHS Communicable Disease staff and immediately traveled on to Macon County for isolation. BCHHS Communicable Disease staff notified the individual's close contacts and provided them with appropriate guidance.

Second Confirmed Case:

The second confirmed case, announced on March 21, 2020, is a Buncombe County resident who was tested on March 16, 2020. Since being tested for COVID-19, they have been in isolation. The source of this individual's infection is unknown at this time. BCHHS Communicable Disease staff continue to identify, notify and interview this individual's close contacts. All asymptomatic contacts are instructed to stay at home and monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following their last contact to the case. Symptomatic close contacts are being sent for testing for COVID-19 and instructed to isolate themselves at home until further direction from BCHHS Public Health.

Third Confirmed Case:

The third confirmed case, announced March 22, 2020, is a resident of Buncombe County who was a close contact to the traveler from New York State. They became symptomatic on March 15, 2020, the date they were tested. The individual has been isolated at their home since they were tested. BCHHS Communicable Disease staff have notified all their close contacts and provided them with appropriate guidance.

Fourth Confirmed Case:

The fourth confirmed case, announced on March 22, 2020, is a resident of Buncombe County who had recent out-of-state travel, which is suspected as being the source of their infection. This person became symptomatic on March 15 and was tested for COVID-19 on March 17. They have been isolated at home since they developed symptoms. BCHHS Communicable Disease staff have notified all their close contacts and provided them with appropriate guidance.

All Buncombe County residents who have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 are doing well under home isolation and remain cooperative with BCHHS Public Health staff. Further details about these individuals will not be released by BCHHS Public Health to protect their privacy.

Over the weekend, results have returned from over 100 COVID-19 tests performed by Buncombe County staff last week at community testing sites. Only one case of COVID-19 has been identified through this testing thus far. Over 200 additional test results are pending at this time.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 (fever and cough or difficulty breathing), please call your healthcare provider for evaluation. If you do not have a healthcare provider, please call a local urgent care or Buncombe County Public Health at 828-250-5300. Please do not call 911 to request testing for COVID-19, and please do not go to the emergency department unless you are seriously ill and require emergency care.

Key steps to prevent COVID-19 transmission include:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, and for at least 20 seconds each time.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Do not reuse tissue after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.

Always check with trusted sources for the latest accurate information about COVID-19. Visit buncombecounty.org for up-to-date local news and prevention measures. State and national information on COVID-19 can be found on North Carolina's COVID-19 webpage and www.cdc.gov/covid19.