

May 8, 2020

Buncombe County Government and Western North Carolina Community Health Services (WNCCHS) will partner to offer community-based COVID-19 testing in the coming weeks for people who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. This is an important and necessary step in understanding and addressing the spread of COVID-19 in Buncombe County.

Due to historic and present-day inequities, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 both locally and nationally. Buncombe County Emergency Operations Center's Rapid Response & Recovery Equity Action Team is identifying the testing site locations based on an equity analysis reliant on relevant data and community input.

WNCCHS medical clinic staff will collect specimens from those with symptoms of COVID-19, send the specimens for testing through a commercial lab, and communicate with everyone tested when results return. Buncombe County Communicable Disease nurses will contact those individuals with lab-confirmed COVID-19 to provide guidance and perform contact tracing. The Buncombe County Emergency Operations Center has made arrangements for safe isolation and quarantine lodging for residents who may need additional resources to limit the spread of coronavirus to others in their household.

Who Should Get Tested?

People who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested for COVID-19. Only those who are symptomatic for COVID-19 will be tested at these sites.

COVID-19 symptoms may include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell

Residents of Buncombe County are encouraged to use the [COVID-19 Self-Checker](#) to assess whether or not they should be tested for COVID-19.

What Are the Costs?

Testing is available to both the insured and uninsured, with no out of pocket cost. Those with health insurance should bring their insurance information with them to the testing site. Language access services will be available at all sites during hours of operation.

Testing Sites, Dates, and Details:

The first phase of COVID-19 community-based testing will be held outdoors at the following locations on the dates listed:

Hillcrest Community Center: 100 Atkinson St, Tuesday, May 12, 2020
Asheville, NC 28801 1pm-4pm

Buncombe County Schools Central Office Thursday, May 14, 2020
175 Bingham Rd, Asheville, NC 28806 1pm-4pm

Kim Wagenaar, WNCCHS Chief Executive Officer, says, “People with limited access to a healthcare provider who is testing for COVID-19, financial barriers to obtaining a test, or those who have no direct healthcare access are encouraged to use the community testing sites. These sites are part of a continuation of our long collaboration with the County and we are pleased to offer these community-based testing opportunities.”

In addition to these community-based testing sites, for those who are unable to obtain COVID-19 testing through their primary care provider, MAHEC Family Health Center at Biltmore, Mercy Urgent Care, and Range Urgent Care have all [expanded testing](#) access. Please see a [map here](#) of COVID-19 testing locations and call before you arrive for testing.

If you have questions about COVID-19 testing in Buncombe County, please visit www.buncombeready.org or call the Ready Team at (828) 419-0095, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. We stand ready to serve our community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Language access services will be available at all sites during hours of operation.

To respect the privacy of individuals at the testing sites, there is a strict no media policy while the testing site is active. Photos and video footage of the testing site will be made available to media via the buncombecounty.org website.