



Press Release

Macon County Public Health Identifies Two COVID-19 Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings

Macon County Public Health has identified two COVID-19 outbreaks in Macon Valley Nursing Home and Eckerd Living Center. Two individuals have tested positive for COVID-19 at both facilities. All are well and isolated from others. Both facilities have been following the highest levels of Personal Protective Equipment standards while in their facility and especially when working with patients.

All the residents and staff of Macon Valley Nursing Home and Eckerd Living Center are being tested for COVID-19 at the direction MCPH's Medical Director and both facilities' leadership team, and plans are in place to isolate any other individuals, should there be a positive result. Macon Valley Nursing Home, Eckerd Living Center, 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.

Both facilities 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.

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.

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

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