



Jackson County Department of Public Health

154 Medical Park Loop • Sylva, NC 28779

Tel: 828-586-8994 • FAX: 828-586-3493

Shelley Carraway
DIRECTOR

For Immediate Release: October 27, 2020

To: Jackson County Community & Stakeholders

From: Jackson County Department of Public Health

Re: Jackson County Department of Public Health Identifies COVID-19 Cluster at Social Gathering

The Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) has identified a COVID-19 cluster associated with a social gathering. The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH) defines clusters of COVID-19 in workplace, educational, and other community settings as: 1) A minimum of 5 cases with illness onsets or initial positive results within a 14-day period AND, 2) plausible linkage between cases where cases were present in the same setting during the same time-period (e.g., same shift, same classroom, same physical work area); that the timing fits with likely timing of exposure; and that there is no other more likely source of exposure for identified cases (e.g., household or close contact to a confirmed case in another setting).

Seven (7) individuals who attended a social gathering on October 18, 2020 at an apartment have tested positive for COVID-19. The investigation is ongoing. All positive individuals are following isolation orders. Symptomatic individuals who test positive will be required to remain in isolation under the following conditions: 1) At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND, 2) At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND 3) Symptoms (like cough and shortness of breath) have improved. Asymptomatic individuals who test positive will be required to remain in isolation under the following conditions: 1) At least 10 days have passed since their positive test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

JCDPH 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 for 15 cumulative minutes during their period of infectivity. Based on the information provided, county health officials will determine the close contacts' risk of exposure and which additional measures are needed like quarantine and/or testing.

In the past two weeks, North Carolina has seen an increase in COVID-19 clusters from social gatherings such as parties, family gatherings, weddings, and funerals. Jackson County is seeing a similar trend. To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 at private social gatherings, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) has released new guidance at <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Private-Social-Gatherings.pdf>.

“We know that our community wants and often needs to come together. We also know our community does not want to spread COVID-19 to the ones that they love. If you choose to gather, please make smart choices. Wear a mask, maintain distance, limit your gatherings to a small number of people, gather outside as much as possible, and wash your hands,” said Deputy Health Director Melissa McKnight.



Jackson County Department of Public Health

154 Medical Park Loop • Sylva, NC 28779

Tel: 828-586-8994 • FAX: 828-586-3493

Shelley Carraway

DIRECTOR

For information about COVID-19, look to reliable sources like JCDPH, NCDHHS, and the CDC. Visit JCDPH's website at <http://health.jacksonnc.org/covid19>. For COVID-19 questions, call the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 828-631-HELP.

###