



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: December 7, 2020

To: Jackson County Community & Stakeholders

From: Jackson County Department of Public Health

Re: Jackson County Department of Public Health Identifies COVID-19 Outbreak at Local Skilled Nursing Facility

Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) has identified a COVID-19 outbreak at a local skilled nursing facility. The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH) defines an outbreak in a long term care setting, like a skilled nursing facility, as two or more laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 within two incubation periods (28 days) in the same facility.

Six (6) residents at Vero Health and Rehab of Sylva have tested positive for COVID-19. 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.

Vero Health and Rehab of Sylva continues to comply with all [Secretarial Orders](#) from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to ensure the safety of its staff and residents. Once the first positive cases were identified, Vero Health and Rehab of Sylva coordinated with JCDPH to determine next steps. Positive cases were immediately isolated, in-person visitation was halted, mandatory testing of staff continued, and all residents were tested. Residents will continue to be monitored for symptoms and re-tested as appropriate. The investigation is ongoing.

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.

###