



## Jackson County Department of Public Health

154 Medical Park Loop • Sylva, NC 28779

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Shelley Carraway  
DIRECTOR

**For Immediate Release: May 4, 2020**

**To: Jackson County Community & Stakeholders**

**From: Jackson County Department of Public Health**

**Re: JCDPH Quick Response to Control Spread of COVID-19 in a Long Term Care Facility**

Last week, the Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) was notified of a Jackson County resident who tested positive for COVID-19. As with all positive cases, JCDPH staff instructed the individual to isolate and began contact tracing. Staff discovered during this process that the individual worked at The Hermitage Assisted Living & Memory Care, a long term care facility in our community.

Because of the possibility for rapid spread of COVID-19 in a long term care facility, JCDPH was prepared for immediate action, investigation, and testing. JCDPH immediately reached out to staff at The Hermitage Assisted Living & Memory Care and coordinated a testing clinic of all residents, employees, and others that may have access to the facility. On April 30, three teams of JCDPH staff, accompanied by staff from The Hermitage Assisted Living & Memory Care, completed an assessment on each individual affiliated with the facility and provided testing both inside and outside of the facility. Samples were sent to the North Carolina State Laboratory for Public Health (NC SLPH) for processing.

On May 4, JCDPH received word from the NC SLPH that every additional employee, resident, and others with access to the facility tested negative for COVID-19.

“We are both elated and relieved,” said Nursing Director Gretta Phillips. “We know that an outbreak in a long term care facility is a serious public health concern and wanted to do everything in our power to protect our most vulnerable. The Health Department is thankful for the partnership provided by the staff at The Hermitage and their continued commitment to keeping their residents, staff, and our community safe.”

“The safety of our residents and our staff is always our top priority,” said Misty Day, Executive Director for The Hermitage. “We are so proud of the heroic team members here who give their all each and every day to care for our residents. The staff member who tested positive followed each and every procedure recommended by the CDC at the first sign of symptoms. With our strict infection-control measures in place and the help and partnership of the Jackson County Health Department, we were able to stop the spread of this virus in our building. We feel so blessed to be able to say that our residents remain safe and healthy, and we are thankful for the continued support of our families, friends and the public throughout this time.”

The Hermitage Assisted Living & Memory Care continues to follow strict infection prevention guidelines to keep their residents and staff safe. For questions about these guidelines, call The Hermitage Assisted Living & Memory Care at 828-586-9070.



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*JCDPH staff prepare for drive thru testing at The Hermitage Assisted Living & Memory Care. Staff from L to R: Julie Creason, Melissa McKnight, Devon Danner Allison, & Briea Parris.*

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