



## Jackson County Department of Public Health

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**For Immediate Release: July 16, 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.

Five employees at the Skyland Care Center have tested positive for COVID-19. All positive employees are following isolation orders. The investigation is ongoing. 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 72 hours have passed since the resolution of fever without the use of medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms. 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 and other local health departments are working to identify any additional close contacts of these employees. The CDC defines close contact as being within approximately 6 feet of a person with an infection with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time of 10 minutes or longer. Based on information provided by the employees, county health officials will assess risks of exposure, determine which if any additional measures are needed, quarantine and/or testing.

Upon notification of the first positive case, Skyland Care Center coordinated with JCDPH to determine next steps. Quarantine and testing were recommended for close contacts of the first positive case. Upon identification of additional cases, Skyland Care Center coordinated COVID-19 testing for all additional employees and residents. Testing was completed by July 16, 2020; results are pending.

“Skyland Care Center takes the health and safety of all its residents and staff very seriously and has prepared the facility and staff for potential exposures in dealing with the pandemic. We will monitor the test results closely and will take preventative measures as necessary to reduce the potential for additional exposures,” said Skyland Care Center Administrator Mistie Cooley.

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.

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