



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: July 20, 2020

To: Jackson County Community & Stakeholders

From: Jackson County Department of Public Health

Re: Jackson County Department of Public Health and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Public Health & Human Services Identify COVID-19 Cluster in Harrah's Cherokee Casino

The Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Public Health and Human Services (EBCI PHHS) have identified a COVID-19 cluster in a local business. 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).

Five employees of the table games section at Harrah's Cherokee Casino 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 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, EBCI PHHS, 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 10-15 minutes during their period of infectivity. 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.

"Harrah's Cherokee Casinos remain committed to the well-being of our employees and customers. Enhanced health and safety protocols in place since reopening include training of our entire team of over 3,000 employees on cleaning and sanitizing techniques, the proper use of PPE, and mandatory wearing of face masks by employees and customers. Based on information provided by the employees and video surveillance records, no other employees or customers have been identified as close contacts as defined by the CDC. Additionally, all employees who test positive, show symptoms or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive have been directed not to come to work and to self-isolate," said Brooks Robinson, Harrah's Cherokee Casino Regional General Manager.



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.

###