



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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Shelley Carraway
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For Immediate Release: July 7, 2020

To: Jackson County Community & Stakeholders

From: Jackson County Department of Public Health

Re: Jackson County Department of Public Health Identifies COVID-19 Cluster in Local Medical Provider's Office

Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) has identified a COVID-19 cluster in a local medical provider's office. 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 Current Dermatology have tested positive for COVID-19. All positive employees are following isolation orders. All additional employees have been tested and received negative results. 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 is 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.

Current Dermatology's Sylva and Clyde locations have been closed since June 26, 2020 and will reopen on July 13, 2020 to allow time for employees to be tested, for their symptoms to resolve, and to have both locations cleaned using a third party cleaning service. All patients seen during the time period of June 15-June 26, 2020 have been notified.

"Since March 2020, Current Dermatology has implemented various safety measures based on CDC guidelines, American Academy of Dermatology guidelines, and company protocols to help protect our patients. Employee measures include temperature checks, wearing masks at all times during patient interactions, and strict handwashing. Patient protection measures include screening questions, temperature checks, social distancing in waiting areas, allowing patients to wait in cars, rescheduling routine appointments for patients deemed high risk for complications from COVID-19, as well as



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requesting patients to wear masks. We also began implementing virtual visits to keep our office numbers lower and provide a safe platform for patients who were not comfortable being in public,” said Dr. Currie Patterson of Current Dermatology. “Current Dermatology has closely monitored data from government and health organizations related to the spread of COVID-19. We took all precautions necessary to protect our patients but since becoming aware of our first associate’s illness on June 27, we quickly realized that there was a need to strengthen our own protocols during staff lunches and times when there were no patients in the clinic. At this time, we plan to reopen our Sylva and Clyde offices on Monday, July 13 and are implementing stricter rules regarding PPE, handwashing, and screening for our employees.”

“Recognizing this situation may worry many patients, family members, and friends, we remain committed to open and timely communication, and continue to take measures to do our part to stop the spread of the virus. Our first priority is the health of our patients and staff, and our sincerest thoughts are with those who are recovering. Please use our experience as a reminder to practice social distancing and wear appropriate PPE,” stated Dr. Patterson.

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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