POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19 ANNOUNCED IN CATAWBA COUNTY

HICKORY, NC – A person living in Catawba County has tested positive for novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The patient is hospitalized and is doing well in isolation. How the person acquired the infection is being investigated.

"We are conducting a thorough contact investigation to mitigate potential community spread," said Catawba County Public Health Director Jennifer McCracken. "We are working to identify close contacts who may be affected. We will give prompt notification to those contacts as they are identified and advise them on appropriate monitoring and testing."

The CDC defines close contact as being within approximately 6 feet of a person infected with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time of 10 minutes or longer. Based on information provided by the individual, Public Health is assessing the risk of exposure to others and will determine which, if any, additional protective measures are needed for those individuals. Protective measures may include temperature and symptom checks, quarantine and/or testing.

Catawba County Public Health is working closely with the assisted living facility where this individual resides to ensure that any contacts there are identified and notified of any measures they need to take.

The most recent county-by-county case count is available at https://www.ncdhhs.gov/covid-19-case-count-nc.

Catawba County Public Health has been working hand-in-hand with Catawba County Emergency Management, Catawba Valley Health System, Frye Regional Medical Center and other community partners for more than a month to plan for the potential local impact of COVID-19.

"We are committed to helping protect the health of our county's residents, including this individual," said McCracken. "We are asking all Catawba County residents to continue taking steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing by staying home whenever possible."

Because COVID-19 is most commonly spread through respiratory droplets, residents should take the following steps to prevent the spread of respiratory illness, including COVID-19:

- Clean your hands often.
    - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
    - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk for experiencing severe illness, including people with underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems or who are over age 65.
- Stay home if you're sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
    - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
    - Throw used tissues in the trash.
    - Immediately wash your hands after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks at least once daily.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them: use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

Symptoms of coronavirus include fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Individuals experiencing these symptoms are encouraged to contact their healthcare provider immediately.

It is important to make sure the information you are getting about COVID-19 is coming directly from reliable sources like the CDC and NCDHHS. For more information, visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus and NCDHHS' website at www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus, which will also include information about future positive COVID-19 test results in North Carolina. If you have questions regarding

Catawba County Public Health promotes and protects the health of all Catawba County residents through preventive services, innovative partnerships, and community health improvement initiatives. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth.

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