**New Hanover County Public Health officials identify COVID-19 in congregate living facility**

NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NC – New Hanover County Public Health officials have identified two lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a local congregate living facility. This meets the NC Department of Health and Human Services' definition of an outbreak: two or more people – residents or employees – in a congregate setting testing positive for the virus within 28 days.

One employee and one resident of The Salvation Army of Cape Fear emergency shelter have been confirmed as having COVID-19. Public Health has worked with the shelter to examine infection control processes and physical distancing measures of residents, and the shelter has been found to have strong mitigation measures in place. Public Health officials are in the process of testing all staff and residents for COVID-19.

“Public Health has been working with all of our housing partners throughout this pandemic, and the Salvation Army has been diligent in working to protect employees and residents,” said New Hanover County Assistant Health Director Carla Turner, RN, MSHCA. “Unfortunately, with increased activity across the community there is more chance of the virus coming into a facility like a shelter. Our team is identifying close contacts to these individuals and testing everyone in the shelter to contain the virus as much as possible, but the entire community can help prevent these outbreaks by all following protective measures whenever we are in public.”

Those key protective measures are:

- Wear a face covering when out in public
- Wait six feet apart from others and don’t gather in groups
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched (like your phone, tablet, countertops and daily work surfaces).
- Stay home if you are sick, and cover your coughs and sneezes.

This is the second outbreak of COVID-19 in a congregate living facility in New Hanover County. Last week, two employees of Northchase Rehabilitation and Nursing Center were confirmed as having COVID-19, but all other staff and residents tested negative for the virus.

Public Health will continue to monitor these situations, and provide support and guidance to all residential facilities in the county. A report of outbreaks in congregate care settings across the state can be found at COVID19.NCDHHS.gov.

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As of 4 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2020, there have been 262 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Hanover County. For more information about COVID-19 in New Hanover County, visit Health.NHCgov.com, call
our Public Health Coronavirus Call Center at 910-798-6800, and follow the county’s trusted social media pages: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor.

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