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Craven County COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Team

New Bern, NC – Craven County Government has established a Craven County COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Team (CCCPRT) as part of Craven County's effort to prepare for the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The CCPRT is made up of key departments including Public Health, Department of Social Services, Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS), Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, Administration, Human Resources, Public Information, Economic Development, Senior Center and Maintenance.

CCCPRT will meet regularly to look at all aspects of County Government and the services it provides to citizens to ensure preparedness for COVID-19. In addition to COVID-19 preparedness, the team is taking steps to promote the health and wellbeing of Craven County residents and employees by examining how services are currently being provided and identifying areas where extra prevention measures can be taken, if needed. Craven County's goal is to continue all services as long as they are in the best interest of the health and safety of citizens.

In addition to the internal CCPRT, Craven County has been, and will continue, to work closely with external partners such as the State of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, North Carolina Emergency Management, Craven County Schools, City of New Bern, City of Havelock and other municipalities in Craven County, CarolinaEast Hospital and the Coastal Carolina Regional Airport.

The Craven County Health Department is able to test for COVID-19 and it is closely monitoring the COVID-19 outbreak. The health department continues to prepare for the possibility of a COVID-19 outbreak in Craven County. The Craven County Health Department is a member of the CCPRT and it also continues to work with local, state, and federal partners to share information and refine protocols should a COVID-19 case be identified in Craven County.

The CCPRT is following the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) Guidelines which are:

HIGH-RISK PERSONS

NC DHHS recommends that people at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should avoid large groups of people as much as possible. This includes gatherings such as concert venues, conventions, church services, sporting events, and crowded social events. People at high risk should also avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel.

People at high risk include anyone:

- Over 65 years of age, or
- with underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes, or
- with weakened immune systems.

The following recommendations pertain to persons and establishments STATEWIDE.

1) CONGREGATE LIVING FACILITIES

NC DHHS recommends that all facilities that serve as residential establishments for high risk persons described above should limit visitors and restrict all visitors who have respiratory illness or potential exposure to COVID-19. These establishments include: nursing homes, independent and assisted living facilities, correctional facilities, and facilities that care for medically vulnerable children.

2) MASS GATHERING OR LARGE COMMUNITY EVENTS

NC DHHS recommends that event organizers:

- Urge anyone who is sick to not attend.
- Encourage those who are at high risk, described above, to not attend.
- Adopt lenient refund policies for people who are high risk.
- Find ways to give people more physical space to limit close contact as much as possible.
- Encourage attendees to wash hands frequently.
- Clean surfaces with standard cleaners.

3) ALL TRAVELERS

NC DHHS recommends that all travelers returning from countries and US states impacted by COVID-19 follow DHHS guidance on self-monitoring.

4) SCHOOLS

NC DHHS is NOT recommending pre-emptive closure of schools and childcare centers at this time.

The following recommendations pertain to persons and establishments in the TRIANGLE area.

1) WORKPLACE SETTINGS

NC DHHS recommends that employers and employees use teleworking technologies to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, employers should:

- Urge employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits.
- Consider staggering start and end times to reduce large numbers of people coming together at the same time.

2) MASS GATHERINGS, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL EVENTS

NC DHHS recommends that organizers of mass gathering events that primarily draw high-risk persons, including those that attract older adults, should consider cancelling or postponing these events.

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper declared a State of Emergency related to COVID-19 on March 10, 2020 which activates the State Emergency Operations Center. This declaration makes it easier for local agencies to coordinate a response to COVID-19. Craven County Emergency Management is maintaining situational awareness by closely monitoring the updated guidelines from the North Carolina Emergency Management State Emergency Operations Center efforts through the Web EOC

system and the North Carolina Division of Public Health. Craven County Emergency Management is actively participating in implementing the new emergency medical services protocols that went into effect last week. Craven County Emergency Management has also implemented Emergency Medical Dispatch protocols to screen 911 medical calls to aid emergency medical services response and they are participating in all conference calls with State of North Carolina Emergency Management.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a new virus first identified in Wuhan, China. Common symptoms are similar to the flu, including fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Coronaviruses like COVID-19 are most often spread from person to person through the air by coughing or sneezing, through close personal contact (including touching or shaking hands), or through touching your nose, mouth, or eyes before washing your hands. The best way to reduce your risk of becoming infected with a respiratory virus, such as COVID-19, is to practice good hygiene:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.
- People who are sick should always cover their coughs and sneezes using a tissue or the crook of their elbow; wash your hands after using a tissue to wipe your nose or mouth.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school until they are well.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your unwashed hands.

Craven County citizens are encouraged to use reputable sources of information to learn more about coronavirus. Reputable sources of information include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and NC Division of Public Health websites and the NC Division of Public Health's Coronavirus call line 1-866-462-3821.

Craven County Government COVID-19 updates will appear on the Craven County website at www.cravencountync.gov, on the Craven County Facebook page [@cravencounty](https://www.facebook.com/cravencounty) and the Craven County Twitter account [@cravencountync](https://twitter.com/cravencountync). Residents are also encouraged to register to receive notifications via the Craven County website and to register to receive emergency notifications via text, email and phone calls through the CodeRed Emergency Notification System.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html> and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health website at <https://ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus>.

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