North Carolina Identifies Second Case of COVID-19

Raleigh
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A second North Carolina person, unrelated to the first case, has tested positive for novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The test, conducted by the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health, is presumptively positive and will be confirmed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lab. The person is doing well and is in isolation at home.

A North Carolina man from Chatham County traveled in late February to an area in Italy that now has a COVID-19 outbreak. He had two days of mild, flu-like symptoms while in Italy. His fever resolved and symptoms were improving, and he flew back to the United States the following day. This person was a contact to a case in Georgia and the Georgia Department of Health notified North Carolina health officials.

Chatham County Public Health Department officials conducted a home visit and collected specimens, which came back presumptively positive last night. He has been cooperative and is in home isolation until follow-up tests are negative. The Chatham County Public Health Department will work to identify close contacts to monitor symptoms. Since the person had been symptomatic before travel, the CDC will identify close contacts on the flight thought to be at risk and notify the appropriate public health agencies. To protect individual privacy, no further information about the identity of the person will be released.

While awaiting confirmation of results from the CDC, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services will treat presumptive cases as positive and follow CDC guidelines to protect public health and limit the spread of infection.

COVID-19 is currently not widespread in North Carolina. Because COVID-19 is most commonly spread through respiratory droplets, North Carolinians should take the same measures that health care providers recommend to prevent the spread of the flu and other viruses, including washing your hands, avoiding touching your face and covering coughs and sneezes.

Last month, Governor Roy Cooper established the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Task Force to support the state's ongoing effort to monitor, prepare for and respond to COVID-19. State actions include:

Containment

- Proactively launched cross-agency preparation work in January, putting together an aggressive containment strategy of rapid identification of suspected cases, testing and contact tracing.

- Began testing cases at the NC State Laboratory of Public Health, which allows for faster results and a faster response.
- Monitoring travelers returning from China through local health departments.

Preparation and Ongoing Response

- Formalized preparation and response work with Governor Cooper creating the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Task Force.
- Developing detailed response plans for a range of scenarios.
- Engaged in regular communication with federal, state and local partners.
- Preparing health care providers and facilities to streamline and standardize response activities including regular calls and mobilizing resources.
- Sharing and updating guidelines on how to proactively prepare and respond, including guidelines for health care providers, child care, employers, schools, colleges and universities and others.

Public Information

- Activated a Joint Information Center to provide timely information.
- Maintaining an up-to-date website with information about COVID-19 disease, risk and guidance.
- Staffing a COVID-19 phone line to answer urgent questions from the public.

North Carolinians with questions or concerns about COVID-19 can call the COVID-19 phone line toll-free at 866-462-3821. This helpline is staffed by the North Carolina Poison Control 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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, please visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus and NCDHHS' website at www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus, which will also include future positive COVID-19 test results in North Carolina.