

NCDHHS Announces COVID-19 Support Services Program for Individuals in Isolation or Quarantine

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) awarded four contracts to regional organizations to administer its new COVID-19 Support Services program. The program will support North Carolinians in 20 targeted counties who are asked to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 and need assistance such as food, relief payments, or access to primary medical care.

“Treating any health matter, including COVID-19, is much more than arriving at a diagnosis. We have to treat the whole person and that includes making sure they have enough food to eat, have a safe place to isolate, and can meet basic living expenses while missing work,” said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. “This is an investment in our community well-being and slowing the spread of this devastating virus.”

Anyone who tests positive for or has been exposed to COVID-19 needs to quarantine or isolate for as long as 14 days, meaning that they need to separate themselves from others, including anyone in their household. Many North Carolinians struggle to safely quarantine and still meet basic needs. The COVID-19 Support Services program is a new effort to provide the supports needed so anyone who needs to isolate or quarantine can do so. This effort is slated to run through late 2020 and DHHS will assess its impact.

When someone tests positive for or has been exposed to COVID-19, they receive a call from a health professional providing guidance on what to do to protect themselves, their families and their community. In these 20 counties, people who need help to successfully meet that guidance will be connected to a Community Health Worker who will coordinate needed services, which may include:

- Nutrition assistance;
- A one-time COVID-19 relief payment to assist the individual and his or her family in meeting basic living expenses;
- Safe, private transportation to and from essential locations such as testing sites, non-congregate shelter and medical visits;
- Access to primary medical care via telehealth;
- Medication delivery; and/or
- COVID-related over-the-counter supplies, such as a face mask, hand sanitizer, thermometer or cleaning supplies.

The COVID-19 Support Services program builds on NCDHHS’ nationally recognized work to address non-medical drivers that impact a person’s health such as food, housing and transportation. It does this by tapping into the infrastructure the Department has built to “buy health” and not just health care.

A foundational component of this ongoing work is NCCARE360, the nation’s first statewide technology platform that enables health and community-based organizations to make electronic referrals, communicate in real time, securely share client information and track outcomes together. NCCARE360 was fast-tracked to help support the state’s COVID-19 response and is now available in all 100 counties. In the COVID-19 Support Services program, connections to services will be made via NCCARE360 whenever possible, allowing Community Health Workers to track the outcomes of their referrals.

The organizations awarded contracts for the Support Services program are:

- Region 1: Quality Home Care Services doing business as Quality Comprehensive Health Center (Mecklenburg, Gaston)
- Region 2: Piedmont Health Services and Sickle Cell Agency (Chatham, Lee, Montgomery, Stanly, Randolph, Rowan)
- Region 3: Duke University Health System (Durham, Granville, Vance)
- Region 4: ADLA, Inc. (Duplin, Bladen, Columbus, Greene, Johnston, Robeson, Sampson, Wayne, Wilson)