



**Foothills Health District (FHD)**  
Foothills Health District Health Department  
<http://www.foothillshd.org/>



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 24, 2020**

In 24 hours, the number of positive cases in Rutherford County grew by 20 additional cases. The positive results represent clear transmission county wide. Contact tracing reveals that transmission is coming from contacts with positives, contacts outside the county as well as community wide transmission. We also have positives that do not have traceable origins.

In addition, the Health Department has identified specific areas in the county where these outbreaks are occurring. These clusters represent health care agencies, retail stores, commercial businesses, congregate living situations and educational entities.

A North Carolina law limits the disclosure of information about reportable communicable diseases such as COVID-19 (G.S. 130A- 143). When the information is obtained by a local Health Department, it may be protected by the Federal HIPAA Privacy rule as well (45 C.F.R Parts 160 and 164). Under North Carolina law, information that identifies an individual who has or may have a reportable communicable disease is strictly confidential, is not public record and may be disclosed as only as allowed by G.S. 130A-143. Further, the Health Department is not allowed to release any information that would be considered individually identifiable. Individually identifiable information would be considered any reasonable information that could identify a patient. For example, an address that is associated with an individual with a particular health status or condition constitutes personal health information.

Therefore, the Health Department will not release the names of the above entities but will defer that to the entity itself to release the information of positive cases.

The Health Department is aggressively testing and conducting contact tracing. If an individual has received a positive result or has been in contact with a positive, they will be contacted by the Health Department and given direction and instructions, included ordered self-isolation or quarantining. The Health Department staff is committed to the health and safety of Rutherford County and is working tirelessly to ensure that all individuals are contacted immediately.

It is critical that the community abide by the stay at home order. This virus is highly contagious and individuals risk exposure every time they leave their home. The numbers will not go down until we stop the movement of the virus.

*For additional information about Foothills Health District or other community resources and health related data, please call our offices, Rutherford Co. (828) 287-6100, McDowell (828) 652-6811, or visit our website at <http://www.foothillshd.org/>*

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