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NCDHHS

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COVID-19 Support Services Program Connected More Than 35,000 Households With Needed Support to Help Them Isolate, Quarantine

Through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' COVID-19 Support Services Program, more than 35,000 households received relief payments, food, transportation to and from testing sites or additional supports to help them isolate or quarantine during the pandemic.

RALEIGH

Through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' COVID-19 Support Services Program, (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/information/human-services/support-

services-program)more than 35,000 households received relief payments, food, transportation to and from testing sites or additional supports to help them isolate or quarantine during the pandemic.

The program — which was set to end when all available funds were spent — is winding down this month, which means no new services can be requested. As the program ends, NCDHHS is celebrating its partners and the results of this innovative initiative.

The Support Services Program launched in August (/news/press-releases/ncdhhs-announces-covid-19-support-services-program-individuals-isolation-or) in identified COVID-19 "hot spots" throughout the state, with a focus on serving historically marginalized populations, which have been hardest hit by COVID-19. Originally in 20 counties, the program expanded to 29 counties, providing assistance such as home-delivered meals and groceries, financial relief payments, COVID-related supplies (such as masks or hand sanitizer), transportation to medical or vaccine appointments and medication delivery to individuals who needed support to be able to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19.

"Through this work, tens of thousands of North Carolinians were able to quarantine and care for themselves and their families. I am proud of my colleagues and grateful to our partners, without whom the Support Services Program would not have been successful," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. "NCDHHS is committed to addressing nonmedical drivers of health, including food, housing, transportation, employment and interpersonal safety, because we know taking a whole person approach is what will really improve health and well-being in North Carolina. Though this program is winding down, we will continue to focus on whole-

person initiatives moving forward."

Anyone who tests positive for or who has been exposed to COVID-19 needs to quarantine or isolate, meaning they need to separate themselves from others, including anyone in their household. But many North Carolinians struggle to safely quarantine and still meet basic needs.

Four vendor partners across the state — ADLA Inc, Duke University Health Systems. Piedmont Health Services and Sickle Cell Agency, and Quality Comprehensive Health Center — operationalized the program across the 29 counties.

In a survey to NCDHHS, Duke University Health Systems (DUHS) shared an example of one of the people the DUHS team helped: "A man who tested positive for COVID-19 needed food, COVID supplies and financial assistance. His truck had been repossessed, his water was cut off and his electricity was about to be cut off."

DUHS and a Community Health Worker got him food and COVID-19 supplies immediately and worked quickly to get the man’s water turned back on the same day.

"When I called to tell him, he said tearfully, 'You saved my life!'" said DUHS in the survey.

The COVID-19 Support Services Program is built on NCDHHS’ long-standing, nationally recognized work to address non-medical drivers that impact a person’s health and the department’s focus on equity in its COVID-19 strategy and work.

Prior to launching the Support Services Program, NCDHHS

launched its Community Health Worker Program (/divisions/office-rural-health/community-health-workers) to establish trust and support within each community.

The Community Health Worker Program employs community health workers in 55 counties (/chw-onepager-2021-1-11/download) to connect North Carolinians with medical and social supports such as diagnostic testing, behavioral health services, education about vaccines in addition to vaccine registration. A community health worker is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of the community, often bilingual, and has a close understanding of the community served. This program, which has served 350,000 North Carolinians to date, will continue through June 30.

"We know and serve our community every day, which allowed us to quickly reach and support those who needed us the most during the pandemic," said Kathy Norcott, Executive Director of Piedmont Health Services and Sickle Cell Agency. "Piedmont Health Services and Sickle Cell Agency shares NCDHHS' commitment to addressing social determinants of health and serving historically marginalized communities in North Carolina, and we have been proud to partner on the Support Services Program."

This press release is related to: