Department of Health restores contact tracing efforts

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Starting today, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is reinstating contact tracing for all individuals who test positive for COVID-19. Contact tracers notify individuals who have been within 6 feet of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour period, so they can quarantine.

In October, the NDDoH asked individuals to self-notify their close contacts in an effort to focus on case investigation due to the surge in positive cases. Contact tracing continued for K-12 schools, universities and health care settings.

“Active cases and hospitalizations across North Dakota continue to decrease, and that’s promising,” said Disease Control Director Kirby Kruger. “To keep our numbers and hospital capacity manageable, we need individuals to continue to isolate when they test positive and quarantine when they are a close contact. This is key, along with other community mitigation efforts, to avoiding another surge in COVID-19 cases.

Close contacts who do not have symptoms and continue to wear a mask can be released from quarantine at 10 days, and individuals who receive a negative test and are symptom-free can be released at the end of seven days. A quarantine and isolation calculator can be found at health.nd.gov/covidcalculator.

To test out of quarantine, a person can either do a PCR test or a rapid antigen screening. The earliest a test should be done is 48 hours before being released from quarantine. Individuals must continue to quarantine while awaiting results and should continue to monitor symptoms and wear a face covering for the full 14 days.

With the upcoming holidays, North Dakotans can be a part of the solution and further mitigate against the spread of COVID-19 by avoiding travel, limiting gatherings and taking simple steps such as wearing a face covering, social distancing, and staying home when sick. For more

information on North Dakota’s COVID-19 response, visit www.health.nd.gov/coronavirus.

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