NCDHHS Launches SlowCOVIDNC Exposure Notification App; Available for Download Today

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has launched a COVID-19 Exposure Notification app called 'SlowCOVIDNC' today, Sept. 22. The app will help North Carolinians slow the spread of the virus by alerting them when they may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. It is completely anonymous and does not collect, store or share personal information or location data.

SlowCOVIDNC, which leverages Google and Apple's Exposure Notification System (ENS), alerts users who have the app if they have been in close contact with an individual who later tests positive for COVID-19 (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/). It is voluntary to download and use and designed to enhance the state's existing contact tracing efforts (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/about-covid-19/contact-tracing). The app completed Beta testing earlier this month and can now be downloaded for free through the Apple App Store (https://apps.apple.com/us/app/id1526471580) and the Google Play Store (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.nc.dhhs.exposurenotification).

"With SlowCOVIDNC App, North Carolinians have another powerful tool to help slow the spread of COVID-19 right in their pockets. Downloading SlowCOVIDNC is a practical step each of us can take to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our state," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D.

Here's how SlowCOVIDNC will work:

1. Download the free SlowCOVIDNC Exposure Notification app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and enable Bluetooth and Exposure Notifications. Bluetooth must be on for the app to work.

2. After opting-in to receive notifications, the app will generate an anonymous token for the device. A token is a string of random letters which changes every 10-20 minutes and is never linked to identity or location. This protects app user privacy and security.

3. Through Bluetooth, phones with the SlowCOVIDNC app work in the background (minimizing battery) to exchange these anonymous tokens every few minutes. Phones record how long they are near each other and the Bluetooth signal strength of their exchanges in order to estimate distance.

4. If an app user tests (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/about-covid-19/testing) positive for COVID-19, the individual may obtain a unique PIN to submit in the app. This voluntary and anonymous reporting notifies others who have downloaded the app that they may have been in close contact with someone in the last 14 days who has tested positive.

5. PINs will be provided to app users who receive a positive COVID-19 test result through a web-based PIN Portal, by contacting the Community Care of North Carolina call center, or by contacting their Local Health Department.

6. SlowCOVIDNC periodically downloads tokens from the server from the devices of users who have anonymously reported a positive test. Phones then use records of the signal strength and duration of exposures with those tokens to calculate risk and determine if an app user has met a threshold to receive an exposure notification.

NCDHHS is partnering with institutions of higher education, local businesses and influential North Carolinians to promote SlowCOVIDNC and educate the public about how widespread use of the app can slow the spread of COVID-19.

To learn more about SlowCOVIDNC and to download the app, visit https://www.covid19.ncdhhs.gov/slowcovidnc (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/slowcovidnc), which also includes an FAQ.

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