STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH
SECRETARY

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
SECRETARIAL DIRECTIVE

NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENTS SHOULD TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS FROM COVID-19

January 6, 2021

Rescinded 2/26/2021

Due to the rapidly increasing number of confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in North Carolina and the rising numbers of individuals hospitalized with COVID-19 and in the intensive care unit with COVID-19, the undersigned finds the issuance of this Secretarial Directive necessary to protect the health of the public.

As of January 6, 2021, 84 of North Carolina's 100 counties are currently categorized as RED on the County Alert System, indicating the highest level of viral spread. In recent weeks, North Carolina has experienced record high numbers of cases reported each day, the percent of tests that are positive, and people hospitalized with COVID-19.

This Secretarial Directive instructs individuals to take immediate action in an effort to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. The individual measures set forth below are in accordance with the recommendations from the White House Coronavirus Task Force and the Governor's Executive Orders on COVID-19 and align with the COVID-19 County Alert System for North Carolina.

Public health data, contract tracing reports, and outbreak investigations indicate that in-home and other informal social gatherings are contributing to the rise in cases across the state. In familiar settings with friends and family, individuals may be more likely to forgo necessary precautions against transmission of COVID-19 such as maintaining social distance or wearing masks. The risk of transmitting and contracting COVID-19 is higher in indoor settings where individuals are in close physical contact (within 6 feet) for an extended period of time (more than 15 cumulative minutes).

While North Carolina has implemented many strategies to fight the spread of COVID-19, we must act now to save lives and protect our hospital capacity across North Carolina to ensure medical care is available to anyone who may need it, whether for COVID-19 or for any other reason.

I. Immediate Actions

Individuals in North Carolina are directed to adhere to the following:

WWW.NCDHHS.GOV
TEL 919-855-4800 • FAX 919-715-4645
LOCATION: 101 BLAIR DRIVE • ADAMS BUILDING • RALEIGH, NC 27603
MAILING ADDRESS: 2001 MAIL SERVICE CENTER • RALEIGH, NC 27699-2000
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Masks and Physical Distance:

1. Wear a mask at all times and maintain physical distance (at least 6 feet) from people when outside your home to the maximum extent possible.
    - Face coverings continue to be the most highly effective way of mitigating the spread of COVID-19, along with social distancing and washing hands. Face coverings do not replace the need for social distancing or washing hands. All three actions are needed to reduce the risk of spread.
2. Do not enter any indoor public spaces where anyone is unmasked or when you see crowds of people who are not physically distanced.

Stay Home

1. Stay home. Limit your public interactions to essential activities such as going to work or school, for health care purposes, to care for family members or to buy food.
2. Avoid leaving your home if you are over 65 or at high-risk for developing serious illness. Use delivery services or alternative pick-up methods for food and retail to the greatest extent possible to avoid in-person interaction with individuals you do not live with.
3. Remain at home between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., unless an exception as set forth in the Governor's Executive Order applies.

Gatherings

1. Avoid gathering with individuals that you do not live with. Multiple households should not co-mingle. If you cannot avoid gathering, keep the gathering strictly outdoors and as small as possible. Wear a mask at all times and avoid activities such as eating that require the removal of your mask.
2. Avoid settings where people may congregate in large numbers, such as entertainment venues.

Testing and Contact Tracing

1. Assume you have become infected if you have gathered with individuals that you do not live with and get tested. Most likely, you will not have symptoms; however, you are dangerous to others, and you must isolate away from anyone at increased risk for severe illness and get tested.
2. Get tested if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
3. Get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19.
4. Answer the call and participate in contact tracing to protect against further spread if you receive a call from the COVID-19 Community Team.

Other Actions

1. Download the **SlowCOVIDNC app** and share with friends and family; if you test positive, enter your pin into the app to notify close contacts to get tested.
2. Get a flu shot.
3. Get the **COVID-19 vaccine** when it is available to you.

II. Distribution

This Secretarial Directive shall be: (l) distributed to the news media and other organizations to bring its contents to the attention of the general public; and (2) distributed to others as necessary to ensure proper implementation of this Secretarial Directive.

Rescinded 2/26/2021

III. Effective Date

This Secretarial Directive is effective immediately. This Secretarial Directive shall remain in effect for the duration of the State of Emergency declared under Executive Order No. 116 unless otherwise modified, rescinded, or replaced.

Signed this the 6th day of January 2021.

Mandy K. Cohen, MD, MPH
Secretary

Rescinded 2/26/2021