



**News Release: Saturday, April 4, 2020**

**Harnett County Health Department announces 2nd COVID-19 related death**

Public Health Officials with the Harnett County Health Department announced the county's second death resulting from COVID-19 on Friday, April 3, 2020. Reports indicate the individual was elderly and had underlying medical conditions. To protect the family's privacy, no further information about this individual will be released.

"We extend our deepest sympathies to the family," stated Health Director John Rouse. "Older adults and people with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, but anyone can have complications from the virus. We are encouraging the community to follow the statewide Stay at Home Order that has been issued to help stop the spread of this disease in our community."

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the Harnett County Health Department recommend that everyone stay at home to the extent possible to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Executive Order No. 121 directs people to stay at home except to visit essential businesses, to exercise outdoors or to help a family member. Specifically, the Order bans gatherings of more than 10 people and directs everyone to physically stay at least six feet apart from others.

For people who think they might have COVID-19 and have mild symptoms, the best thing to do is stay home and recover. When people with symptoms leave their home to get tested, they could expose themselves to COVID-19 if they do not already have it. If they do have COVID-19, they could give it to others like critical health care workers and people at high risk for severe illness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated who is at high risk for severe illness. People at high risk include anyone who:

- Is 65 years of age or older
- Lives in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- Has a high-risk condition that includes:
  - chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - heart disease with complications
  - compromised immune system
  - severe obesity - body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher
  - other underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, such as diabetes, renal failure or liver disease

In addition, pregnant women should be monitored closely since they are known to be at risk for severe viral illness. However, data so far on COVID-19 has not shown increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness in pregnant women. While children are generally at lower risk for severe infection, some studies indicate a higher risk among infants. As of Friday, April 3, 2020, Harnett County has 24 confirmed cases of COVID-19. For more information visit the Harnett County Health Department's website located at [www.harnett.org/health](http://www.harnett.org/health).