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Franklin County COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
Upset by the COVID-19 EOC Projected Death & Case Numbers for Franklin County?

From:

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Communication:

The planning numbers recently released that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been using to gather data to plan for the worst-case scenario... don't have to be what numbers really hit Franklin County. These numbers are intended for planning purposes to plan for how bad things could get if we don't have everyone on board with all necessary measures (below) to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Franklin County ranks #35 Healthiest County in NC out of 100 counties (#1 is the healthiest). The top 10 counties are FAR healthier than the remaining counties, and for Franklin County, that is largely due to a higher population of people aged 65 or older and a higher population of people with underlying health conditions (COPD, diabetes, obesity, etc). Not being one of the healthier counties puts us at increased risk for a lot of our population being affected by this virus.

How can EVERYONE help keep these numbers low?:

- Avoid touching your face
- **Wash your hands** frequently & thoroughly using warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds
- **Use hand sanitizers** frequently
- Cough/sneeze into your arm, or if you use a tissue, immediately throw it out and wash your hands.
- Isolate/separate yourself from others if you're sick (or if they are sick);
- **STAY HOME** if you feel the slightest bit sick (don't go to work or to any store)
- Avoid vulnerable populations: people age 65 and older; those with underlying health conditions and/or weakened immune systems; and those who are pregnant.
- Do not group together and keep six (6) feet apart from anyone you don't live with.
- If you must go out, **maintain at least 6 feet of space** between you and others
- If you must go out, feel free to use a cloth covering to protect others from **you**, if you happen to have the virus but just aren't showing symptoms yet;
- **Don't count on gloves or a cloth mask alone to keep you safe**, wash your hands, don't touch your face, and use hand sanitizer if you have it.

- If you have gloves, masks etc., use them correctly (wearing a pair of gloves everywhere you go means you now have collected everything you've been in contact with, on those gloves.)
- **“If they don't live with you in your house, then they can't come in, and if you meet them in public, keep them at least 6 feet away.”**

WE ARE ASKING FOR YOUR HELP! All Franklin County citizens/workers/visitors can help our county NOT reach these numbers by following all the guidelines above to prevent the spread.

Franklin County EOC members are hoping for the best but we must plan for the worst so we will be ready no matter how bad things get here. The current US death rate for those who get COVID-19 is around 1.3%-1.5%. **We must be ready with a plan in place before we are in the middle of it.**

For the EOC, being “ready” means we have been gathering data about where to send very sick residents for care when they are unable to breathe on their own at home. We are finding out things like how many hospital beds are in our local hospitals, how many are in the ICU or the emergency department, and how many life-saving ventilators each hospital has available. We are planning for how to properly transport and store dead bodies that could potentially still be contagious with COVID-19, and what to do if the number of bodies is much higher than the number we can safely maintain. We gather data frequently regarding how many N-95 masks, gowns, gloves, etc. that the front-line workers have available to them so we can protect N-95 masks, gowns, gloves, etc. that the front-line workers have available to them so we can protect those at highest risk, all while these workers continue to do their jobs protecting and serving the public.

For everyone else in Franklin County, you don't have to just “hope for the best”, you can actually “behave for the best.” We hope the plans we are making now will never have to be activated. Things to keep in mind to be AVOIDED include:

- Barbecues, birthday parties, or other large gatherings
- Gathering at restaurants (even outside) where take-out is available
- Basketball & other group games
- Kids playing together outside
- Adult get-togethers
- Waiting in line too closely at stores
- Too many people at hardware stores, gas stations, outside of take-out restaurants and other places to catch up with friends or neighbors
- Easter and other holiday gatherings with those who don't live with you all the time.

For weeks now, healthcare providers have been telling everyone (except the most-sick or essential healthcare providers) that if they have mild symptoms, to STAY home and not seek testing. Instructions have also included that if symptoms get worse or cannot be managed at home, to call your doctor for instructions or to go to the nearest hospital.

Since so many mildly sick people have been told to stay home (to prevent spreading the virus), providers have NOT tested nearly as many people as those who likely have it. Since there is NO TREATMENT, it does not make any difference about getting a test or not. It DOES matter if these mildly sick people are staying home so they don't spread it to someone who may have underlying health concerns that may get very sick or die if they get the virus.

If you feel like you may be getting sick:

Isolate yourself and call your doctor if your symptoms worsen. Everyone with fever and respiratory symptoms should isolate themselves from everyone until BOTH conditions below are met:

- At least 7 days since symptom onset.

AND

- Over 72 hours after symptom resolution (i.e. absence of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication and improvement of respiratory symptoms).

Close Contacts:

- Those with close contact to a person with fever or respiratory illness are encouraged to stay home to the extent possible, and to monitor themselves for symptoms.

We need everyone pulling together if we are to slow the spread of this virus in Franklin County!