

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kristin Prelipp, Communications Manager and
Public Information Officer

kprelipp@orangecountync.gov or (919) 245-2462

Orange County Health Department Reporting First COVID-19 Associated Death

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. April 10, 2020 – An Orange County resident died from complications associated with the virus, COVID-19. The patient was in their 70's and was under Hospice Care at PruittHealth – Carolina Point, one of two long-term care facilities in Orange County where there are outbreaks of COVID-19. To protect the families' privacy, no further information about the patient will be released.

“We extend our deepest sympathies to the family and loved ones. This loss is deeply felt by our entire community. Now more than ever, each of us must do our part to prevent the spread of this virus, especially to our most vulnerable,” said Orange County Health Director, Quintana Stewart.

There are outbreaks of COVID-19 at two long-term care facilities in Orange County, occurring at PruittHealth – Carolina Point and Signature HealthCARE at Chapel Hill. An outbreak is defined as two or more cases. Orange County currently has a total of 104 cases of COVID-19. The case count for each county is for laboratory confirmed cases linked to the individual's home county of residence. All positive PruittHealth and Signature HealthCARE cases may not be reflected in the overall Orange County case total.

It has been confirmed that PruittHealth has at least 86 positives cases and the total includes staff and residents. Nine residents are at Duke University Hospital. In the case of Signature HealthCARE there are 31 positive tests and some are being cared for at UNC Hospitals. More test results are pending for Signature Health.

Across the state of North Carolina, there are 21 outbreaks in congregant living settings, such as jails or shelters. Eighteen of the outbreaks are among long-term care facilities. The Orange County Health Department (OCHD) has worked with Orange County EMS, UNC Hospitals and Duke Hospitals to focus on prevention and response at long-term care facilities. Staff from these agencies formed strike teams that have worked closely with the facilities. The strike team tested all staff and residents so they know who carries COVID-19, even if they are asymptomatic.

High Risk Populations

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.

Approximately 12% of all COVID-19 cases are serious enough to require hospitalization. Many people are surprised to learn 20% of those hospitalizations were among patients 20-44 years old. Additionally, of patients aged 20 – 44 who get COVID-19, between 14 and 21% get sick enough to require hospitalization.

LINK TO PRESS RELEASE FROM APRIL 8, 2020: Orange County Health Department Reporting Outbreaks of COVID-19 at Two Long-Term Care Facilities:

<https://www.orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10490/COVID-19-outbreak-at-long-term-care-facilities>

Reliable Information

For the latest information and guidance relating to Orange County's COVID-19 response, visit <https://www.orangecountync.gov/Coronavirus>

The phone line for questions about COVID-19 is 919-245-6111 and is available from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Spanish language and other languages are available. The phone line will be closed on Friday, April 10th due to a Orange County Government Holiday.

To receive daily text updates on the crisis, please text OCNCEALTH to 888-777. For Spanish speakers, text OCNCSALUD to 888-777.

You may also sign up for a twice weekly e-newsletter about the COVID-19 response via our website.

Please follow the Orange County Health Department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

NCDHHS' website <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/covid-19-case-count-nc>, will include future positive COVID-19 test results in North Carolina.

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