Caldwell County, North Carolina
Situation Report #12

March 25, 2020 1700hrs

NEW INFORMATION HIGHLIGHTED

Incident Overview

Caldwell County, and each municipality within its boundaries, is currently operating under a State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic as of March 18, 2020 at 08:00hrs. The State of North Carolina declared a State of Emergency on March 10, 2020, the World Health Organization issued a pandemic designation on March 11, 2020 and a federal declaration of a National Emergency was issued on March 13, 2020. **3 (Three) residents tested positive for COVID-19.**

I. **Situation to Date:**
   a. Weather: Humidity 38%; Wind Speed 10 mph; Temp. 68°F - Partly Cloudy – Current;
   b. EOC Activation Level – Level 3 Activation - Monitoring Situation – Normal Operations;
   c. Casualties – None;
   d. Shelter(s) – None;
   e. Law – Normal Operations;
      i. Site security at testing locations and RDC (Caldwell-UNC Healthcare) is becoming necessary and a concern for staff at the assigned locations; both for security and traffic control;
ii. No current COVID-19 cases being reported in the inmate population of Caldwell County;

f. Emergency Medical – Normal Operations;
   i. SC-2 High Consequence Pathogens Protocol Updated 3.23.2020;
   ii. LZ relocation for air-transports from Caldwell-UNC Healthcare due to placing triage tent outside of ED – new location WaterLife Church parking lot for hospital flights – crews to use scene flights or transport to Hickory Regional Airport for scene calls;

g. Emergency Management – Increased Operations;
   i. EOP Implemented/Activated;
   ii. EOC Activated – Level 3 Operations;

h. Fire & Rescue – Normal Operations;
   i. Reduced supply of PPE – COVID-19 approved;
   ii. PPE and supply orders being submitted daily through NCEM via WebEOC;

i. Communications – Normal Operations;
   i. • COVID-19 EMD (Dispatch for High Consequence Pathogen) protocols and procedures in place;
       • Further reduction of first responders on medical/unknown medical calls;
       • All communications channels are functioning normally;
       • IC/EOC utilizing County PIO’s to manage public information and monitor local/regional/National news outlets as well as handling media requests;
       • Approval to further limit first responder response on medical calls given by Medical Director and ES Director – implementation made Sunday March 22, 2020;
       • Recommendations from NC SOG has been implemented in 911 Communications effective Monday, March 23, 2020:
         Individually identifiable information about individuals with known or suspected COVID-19 may be given to 911 dispatch. Dispatch will be instructed that the information is confidential under GS 130A-143, protected by HIPAA, and not public record.
       When medical first responders (EMS) are dispatched, information needed for treatment may be disclosed, including information about COVID-19.
       When a non-medical first responder (such as fire or law enforcement) is dispatched, they should be told that they need PPE and instructed in which PPE is required. They should not be given specific information regarding COVID-19.
       • Effective immediately, 911 calls with patients meeting COVID-19 criteria, patients which are quarantined and/or patients which have tested positive will be given out over the air as: “NCIP Protocol” to alert responders of the need to don appropriate PPE. This will be pronounced “In-sęp” or with the individual letters “N-C-I-P”;

j. Donations Management – N/A;

k. Public Health – Increased Operations –
   i. • Caldwell County has 3 positive COVID-19 cases, 370 tested patients; 78 negative, 292 pending;
      • NC Cases: 504, NC Deaths: 1; Per NCDHHS;
      • NC Cases: 576, NC Deaths: 2; Per Johns Hopkins University (JHU);
      • U.S. Cases: 54,453, U.S. Deaths: 737; (per CDC – Updated at noon Monday - Friday);
      • U.S. Cases: 62,086, U.S. Deaths: 869; (per JHU);
   ii. • Monitoring returned travelers and other potentially exposed persons for symptoms;
       • Facilitating triage and testing of individuals who meet testing criteria – Onsite Location (HHS Bldg.) and remote testing at households, etc.;
      • Engaged in regular communication with federal, state and local partners;
      • Information Sharing through JIC and Community Partners;
      • Implementation of hotline for community questions and identifying staff to answer phones;
       • Public Health Educators actively providing guidance to first responders, law enforcement, and other county/city agencies;
       • Screening walk-in clients/patients prior to arriving to the lobby of the Health Department;
   iii. • CCHD has 0 LabCorp test kits left. Orders being placed daily;
      • CCHD has 14 State test kits, Orders being placed daily;
iv. EO issued for all restaurants to close at 17:00 (5:00pm) for all dining areas.

I. Caldwell-UNC Healthcare – Increased Operations;
   i. Implementation of Helpline (888.850.2684) for screening of potential patients before visiting a doctor’s office, urgent care location, hospital or emergency department;
   • Respiratory Diagnostic Center to screen patients with respiratory symptoms – 1031 Morganton Blvd SW, Lenoir, NC;
   • Engaged in regular communication with federal, state and local partners;
   • Information Sharing through Caldwell County EOC, the JIC and Community Partners;
   • EMTALA waiver issued;
   • Potential Drive-thru test locations identified;
   • Limiting visitors, access to certain locations of the facility;
   • Facility EOC activated;

   ii. No longer requesting additional COVID-19 test kits through NCEM procurement processes per NCEOC – Ben Barham;

   iii. Requesting additional medical face shields/surgical masks through NCEM procurement processes;

iv. Requesting various medical supplies through NCEM procurement processes;

m. Schools – CCS Closed per EO 117; CCC&TI Closed to the public until 3/31/2020; New EO Closes K-12 schools through May 15, 2020;

n. Caldwell County Government –
   • Caldwell County Resource Center – Library closed to the general public; Board of Elections – Open; Ag Extension – Open; Water – Open; Meeting Rooms – Open with group size limitations imposed per SOE; Caldwell Soil & Water Conservation District – Open;
   • Granite Falls Tax, Water & EMS Payment Center – Open;
   • Alden Starnes County Office Building (905 West Ave.) – limited access to general public; any operations that need to take place are being addressed through alternative means such as drop boxes and phone/online processing. If any County employee needs to access the Alden Starnes County Office Plaza for business purposes and does not have a key, please make sure to contact who you are coming to see to gain access to the building.
   • Health & Human Services Bldg. – Open – access for general public limited to certain areas to protect against exposure of staff and citizens; measures are in place so that interaction can happen behind glass as much as possible and when applicable;
   • Caldwell County Sheriff’s Office – Open – gun applications and finger printing has been moved to the lobby and renewals are being completed online; visitor access to the jail has been limited to lawyers/legal representatives only;
   • Contingency plans being developed in preparation of the potential for limited staffing and further closings;
   • The Commissioner’s Work Session, scheduled for Monday, March 23, has been re-designated to discuss COVID-19 issues, response and prevention;
   • We continue to thoroughly clean and disinfect our buildings with agents that kill the coronavirus; our goal, as always, is to keep our personnel safe;

II. Actions to Date:
   a. EOC: Level 3 Activation, General Staff Only;
   b. Minimum Staffing Updates, Altered EMD Protocols, limiting first responders on scenes of potential cases;
   c. Active restriction for access to all Emergency Services Facilities to county personnel only – effective immediately;
   d. All station tours, public event appearances and out of County meetings or conferences are suspended indefinitely;
   e. Effective immediately all out of county travel is suspended for all employees for any non-emergency and non-essential travel or training without the permission of the County Manager. This does not include Emergency Services or Law Enforcement transports to the various medical and/or detention facilities. Nor,
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...does this apply to any mandated/court ordered travel for the Health Department or Department of Social Services;

f. Department Head Briefings scheduled for each Wednesday @ 0900 until further notice;
g. Identification of staff eligible for “work from home” status identified;
h. EOC Plans and Procedures updated;
i. Activated Joint Information Center;
j. SOE issued 0800hrs 3/18/2020;
k. Completed UNC-Caldwell Respiratory Diagnostic Center Meeting;
l. Completed DPH, NCEM, COG, NCSOG and local conference calls;
m. Provided for sleeping quarters and arrangements during SOE;
n. Identified Drive-Thru Testing Site location and necessary supplies and equipment required;
o. Joint Information Center Activated;
q. CCES EMS Division issuing PPE kits to all volunteer departments;

III. Actions to be Completed:

a. Limited Operation Guidelines;
b. E911 staffing considerations;
c. DPH COVID-19 Conference Call – Tuesdays @ 13:00hrs;
d. DPH COVID-19 Coordination Call – Thursdays @ 11:00hrs;
e. Caldwell-UNC Healthcare Touch Point Conference Call – Daily @ 0900hrs;
f. NC Emergency Management Conference Call – M/W/F @ 1600hrs;
g. Continue to update long-term staffing plan for EOC and Support Services;
h. Ordering of more COVID-19 tests;
i. Continue COVID-19 information dissemination to providers, stakeholders, community, etc.;

IV. Issue(s):

a. PPE concerns for first responder agencies – limited stock and no means of re-ordering from traditional access points; Childcare needs;

Notes:

Secretary Hooks recommended approval to Governor Cooper to authorize additional NC National Guard soldiers to be on-boarded in a state active duty status to assist with commodity management, transportation of supplies and logistical planning. Governor Cooper concurred with his recommendation and authorized the additional Soldiers and Airmen to be activated.

PPE is provided based on availability, regardless of urban/rural, not-for-profit/for-profit agency. We need the partnership and support from many healthcare organizations and providers statewide to mitigate impacts of medical surge.

Priorities for requests based on current supply chain are as follows:

A. Healthcare
   a. Acute Care
      i. Hospitals
      ii. Transport EMS Agencies
   b. Long Term Care with identified need (infectious disease outbreak)
   c. Non-transport EMS Agencies/First Responders
   d. Health Departments
   e. Dialysis Centers / Urgent Care Centers
   f. Primary Care Providers

B. County Transport Services / Convalescent EMS Services

C. Law Enforcement & Jails / Corrections / Child Protective Services
D. Other government entities who are requires to interact with public such as Division of Motor Vehicles and County human services

Information regarding re-entry registration for businesses is now available online at www.readync.org/reentry. This location will remain as a permanent home for information on the vendor/business re-entry process.

Governor’s request for a major disaster declaration for North Carolina was received by FEMA. This specifically requested Individual Assistance, Crisis Counseling Program, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance and more.

Information related to the number of cases, both confirmed and deaths, are obtained through NCDHHS, Johns Hopkins University CSSE and CDC only. The numbers will be reflected as their respective webpages are updated. This is in an attempt to deliver only verified/accurate information for dissemination to our colleagues and the community at large.

NC Governor Cooper signs Executive Order banning mass gatherings of more than 50 persons; Closing gyms, movie theaters, health clubs, sweepstakes, Hair/Nail/Barber/Massage salons effective Wednesday, March 25, 2020. More information to come once the EO are released;

NC Governor and Government encouraging high risk populations, especially those ages 65 and older with underlying medical conditions, to remain at home as much as possible;

Caldwell County Emergency Services and Health Department Directors continue to officially request any local, regional or State businesses consider donating PPE, specifically N95 respirators, to emergency services agencies and health departments to assist in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic rather than solely diverting their stock and supplies to medical and acute care centers;

Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4°F [38.0°C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick;

The NC State Lab was notified by CDC on March 15, 2020 that specimens from our facility no longer needed to be sent to CDC for confirmation. All COVID-19 testing results currently being reported by the NCSLPH are now final results and are NOT presumptive;

Because of this change, NCDHHS is no longer breaking down reported cases on our website [ncdhhs.gov] by presumptive and confirmed positives. To avoid confusion, we will no longer refer to test results as “presumptive positive” and instead refer to them as “positive.”;

NCDHHS is no longer issuing a press release for every positive case of COVID-19. Instead, positive cases are updated as a total on our website and displayed on a map broken down by county;

Effective immediately, Caldwell County 911 Communications will cease sending first responders on any call which EMD cannot be/is not completed. This will not include cardiac/respiratory arrests/rescues/MVC/mass casualty/etc.; Further alteration to the dispatch protocols will be made as the situation warrants;

Approved PPE is being requested daily, and will be distributed as it is obtained; currently we have not been advised of any PPE requests being approved by the State due to limited supplies; The County’s Strategic Stockpile is being utilized in the interim and will be pushed forward as our front-line PPE is exhausted;

Departments: please be mindful of the deployment of your personnel and the PPE issued by the County and your respective department(s); supplies are limited at both the local/regional/State and Federal levels. Further stockpiles have been released, however, the total numbers pale in comparison to the need;

Key Concepts in Relation to Healthcare Employees and Responder Infection Control:
• **Limit how germs can enter the facility.** Cancel non-essential functions, use digital communication when possible, limit points of entry and manage visitors, screen patients for respiratory symptoms, encourage patient respiratory hygiene using alternatives to facemasks (e.g., tissues to cover cough).

• **Isolate symptomatic patients as soon as possible.** Set up separate, well-ventilated triage areas, place patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in private rooms with door closed and private bathroom (as possible), prioritize AIIRs for patients undergoing aerosol-generating procedures.

• **Protect healthcare personnel.** Emphasize hand hygiene, install barriers to limit contact with patients at triage, cohort COVID-19 patients, limit the numbers of staff providing their care, prioritize respirators and AIIRs for aerosol-generating procedures, implement PPE optimization strategies to extend supplies.


NC 2-1-1 by United Way of North Carolina is now available for people to call for assistance related to the COVID-19 coronavirus

COVID-19 text information and updates are available. To sign up, text COVIDNC to 898211.

ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus publishes regular updates, including new guidance that is developed, information about Executive Orders and other important information.

The Caldwell Chamber of Commerce has created a new Facebook group, called Caldwell County Take Out and Delivery. Join at [www.facebook.com/groups/588984345292828](http://www.facebook.com/groups/588984345292828).

United Way of Caldwell County has set up the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Learn more at [www.caldwellunitedway.org](http://www.caldwellunitedway.org).

Duke Energy has temporarily suspended disconnections for nonpayment in response to the pandemic. Learn more at [www.dukeenergyupdates.com](http://www.dukeenergyupdates.com).

Yokefellow has closed its Thrift Store and its Emergency Assistance Office to the public. The Food Pantry will continue to operate 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.