

# CARTERET COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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For Immediate Release

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## **Carteret County Response to COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions**

**Why is the Carteret County Health Department not informing the public as to what areas of the County have confirmed cases of COVID-19?** The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a U.S Law that requires health providers to follow privacy standards to protect a patient's medical records and other protected health information. If there is a positive case that would put a person at immediate risk, that person would be informed by the Carteret County Health Department directly. If public health officials learn of a confirmed case where the confirmed individual was in close contact (within 6 feet of a confirmed case for more than 10 minutes) with others, they will notify those individuals and give them instructions to self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms.

**Why is Carteret County not doing a press release for every new case?** The Carteret County Task Force expects an increase of positive cases in our area and they have planned for managing that situation. Instead of inundating the public with these numbers in press releases, the County would like to reserve those for new updates for response or emergency notices. The County has decided to update confirmed County COVID-19 cases on our website at [www.carteretcountync.gov](http://www.carteretcountync.gov), on the public information line 252-726-7177 and by an email to media at 11:30 am and 4:30 pm.

**What is the number of tests given?** Providing an accurate number of tests is nearly impossible because tests are collected by multiple providers and samples are sent directly to be processed by multiple laboratories. However, the Carteret County Health Department does receive all positive results and the County will report those updated numbers at 11:30 am and 4:30 pm on the County website at [www.carteretcountync.gov](http://www.carteretcountync.gov), on the public information line at 252-726-7177 and by an email to the media.

**Why has the County not closed for visitors and non-residents?** This is logistically a difficult decision to enforce with the multitude of entry points into the County. In addition to health care providers and safety personnel, Carteret County continues to have businesses open in order to provide basic needs to permanent residents such as grocery stores, child care and gas stations. Many of these businesses employ residents who may not live in the County.

Carteret County officials and municipalities have discouraged travel to our area and closed access points to area beaches. The Commissioners have also requested that the Crystal Coast Tourism Authority enact a voluntary policy to suspend new bookings to the area from March 22, 2020 to April 6, 2020.

**Does the Governor's Executive Order 118 and the Secretary's Order of Abatement apply to private clubs who offer food and drinks?** Yes. According to the FAQ sent by NCDHHS, the Order and Order of Abatement defines restaurants to include private or members only clubs where food and beverages are permitted on premises. Local law enforcement agencies are generally responsible for enforcement of these Orders.

For more information on Carteret County's response due to the COVID-19, please visit [www.carteretcountync.gov](http://www.carteretcountync.gov) or call the Carteret County Citizens Call Center at 252-726-7060, Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm to speak with a County operator.

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