



## HOKE COUNTY Department of Public Health

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TO: Facilities that Serve High Risk Populations for COVID-19

FROM: Helene Edwards, MS, RDN, LDN, Health Director  
Dr. Karen Smith, MD, Medical Director

SUBJECT: Recommendation to restrict visitation for people at higher risk for severe illness

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, Hoke County Health Department recommends that residential establishments for people at higher risk for severe illness – such as nursing homes, independent and assisted living facilities, correctional facilities, and facilities that care for medically vulnerable children – restrict visitors from entering their buildings until further notice.

All providers should review and post the enclosed information for patients and staff to access. Please let us know if you would like additional educational information for distribution or you may access these materials online through the CDC website here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html> or through the NC DHHS website here: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina/materials-and>

We can all help to reduce risk for our loved ones. For everyone's safety, we are asking the public to avoid visits facilities that serve high risk populations and take advantage of technology, such as video calling, instead of making a visit in person.

High risk populations include adults over 65 years, people with weakened immune systems, and those with underlying health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes.

**The local risk of contracting COVID-19 remains low; however, we still encourage you to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19 and any other flu-like illness by taking the following steps:**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use a generous amount of hand sanitizer which is at least 60% alcohol on all surfaces of the hands and wrists.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay away from sick people.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces – especially ones that are frequently touched – using regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Stay home if you're sick and don't send sick children to school or childcare.
- High risk individuals should avoid large gatherings such as concerts, church services, and sporting events.

As questions and concerns about coronavirus (COVID-19) increase across North Carolina, we'd like to encourage promotion of the statewide Coronavirus Helpline (1-866-462-3821) for the public, which is answered 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.