

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:

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HEALTH TASK FORCE CONTINUES DRIVE-THRU TESTING FOR COVID-19

-- Services are by appointment only, site is closed to the public --

(CHRISTIANSBURG, Virginia) -- The Montgomery County Public Health Task Force will continue to operate a drive-thru testing site, as part of the regional COVID-19 public health response, on Thursday and Friday afternoons, April 2 and 3, at Blacksburg High School. The site is closed to the public. Please do not go there. (Additional sites may open in the future at various locations and at various times, as needed.)

ONLY those individuals with a letter of authorization from the Virginia Department of Health's New River Health District will be allowed access to the sites, and only by appointment, to receive appropriate testing, assessment and referral services.

"Testing is important epidemiologically and helps us determine the prevalence of disease in our community," said Noelle Bissell, M.D., director of the New River Health District, "but because capacity is limited we screen for those at highest risk. As we continue to test, we expect to have more positive cases."

Anyone with questions, or who thinks they might need testing, should call the New River Health District's COVID-19 public health call center at 540-267-8240. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. After hours, leave a message.

"In the vast majority of cases, testing does not inform our recommendations for your medical care," Dr. Bissell continued. "The best protection for each of us comes from personal precautions, including hygiene and social distancing. That's how YOU stay well, and how you protect those around you today, AND those you will be with tomorrow."

"These sites take the pressure off our hospital systems and first responders so that they can provide essential medical and public safety services, around the clock," said Blacksburg Police Chief Anthony Wilson. "Instead of being tasked with assessment and transport, they can concentrate on true life-threatening medical emergencies."

The Task Force has identified a variety of resources, including buildings, vehicles, equipment and personnel, throughout the region that stand ready to be deployed as response assets. The Task Force works cooperatively to provide effective measures to protect residents, in the face of this public health emergency, and will provide appropriate instructions and information as additional protective measures are recommended.

To lower the risk of spreading respiratory infections, including COVID-19, the Virginia Department of Health encourages everyone to:

- Stay home when you are sick;
- Avoid contact with sick people;
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing;

(More)

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces;
- If you are experiencing symptoms, call your doctor;
- Practice social distancing. Maintain at least six feet of space between yourself and other individuals when out in public;
- Avoid close contact with crowds of any size, and avoid any crowd of more than 10 people; and
- Stay home except in extremely limited circumstances.

For the most accurate and up-to-date information online, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/new-river, www.nrvroadtowellness.com, www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus and www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

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MEDIA NOTE:

News media access to the Blacksburg High School testing site is available Thursday and Friday, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. ONLY.

Access will be escorted, and is only for the purposes of photography and videography from a distance. These measures are necessary to ensure patient privacy and operational security.

No interviews will be available at the site and no broadcasts will be permitted from the site.

To gain access to the site, come to Blacksburg Fire Department Station #2, 2700 Prices Fork Road, between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m. ONLY, on Thursday and Friday.

For more information and interview requests, contact Robert Parker, public information officer, Virginia Department of Health, Western Region, robert.parker@vdh.virginia.gov.