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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Martin County, NC Coronavirus COVID-19 Response – Advisory #9 Social Distancing Is Working; Martin County Encourages Citizens to Remain Vigilant

WILLIAMSTON, NC – Martin County continues to remain in close and constant communication with local, state and federal health care and emergency response officials in regards to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As of April 13, 2020, the Martin-Tyrrell-Washington (MTW) District Health Department had 7 confirmed cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Martin County. Of these cases, 1 individual has recovered. The MTW District Health Department will continue to closely monitor confirmed cases in Martin County.

Many people with COVID-19 may not be included in these reports of laboratory confirmed cases – including the following groups:

- People who do not feel sick,
- People who had symptoms but did not seek care / testing and who self-quarantined, and
- People who sought care but may have been recommended by their provider to self-quarantine or they did not meet current CDC guidelines for testing.

Wes Gray, Health Director of MTW District Health stated, “While we are expecting an increase in new cases in the next two weeks, we have seen a dramatic decrease in the projections for hospitalizations and deaths in North Carolina. Public health models have also predicted a drop in the in the number of hospital beds, intensive care units, and ventilators needed to address the peak of COVID-19 cases throughout the month of April. The social distancing measures put in place over the last several weeks have had a tremendously positive impact, and it is crucial that we continue this trend by staying at least six feet apart, practicing good hygiene habits, staying at home if you are sick, and only going out for items that are absolutely essential.”

Martin County encourages its citizens to also continue to respect Governor Roy Cooper’s Stay at Home Order (Executive Order No. 121) and to be mindful of the Governor’s order for retail stores to restrict traffic to five customers per 1,000 square feet of retail space (Executive Order No. 131).

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Cloth face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face,
- Be secured with ties or ear loops,
- Include multiple layers of fabric,
- Allow for breathing without restriction, and
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

Citizens are asked to remain calm during this challenging time and to continue educating themselves about the latest guidelines available from local, state and federal health care authorities concerning the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Visit www.mtwdistricthealth.org for the latest information on COVID-19 (coronavirus).

As per Center for Disease Control (CDC) advice, citizens are advised to stay at home if they are sick, or if they have a sick family member in their home. Citizens who have questions or concerns or who are showing signs of symptoms of the virus are strongly encouraged to call their primary physician or MTW District Health at 252-793-3023 for information and/or further instructions.

Citizens are also encouraged to continue supporting local restaurants and businesses, while maintaining social distancing. Citizens are also asked to check on seniors who may need supplies but who may wish to stay at home.

Martin County remains committed to providing key services during this challenging time. Public access to the Martin County offices and facilities continues to be restricted to appointments only, with limited exceptions. Staff will continue to be available to serve the public by phone and email from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Public access to all County offices (except for the Sheriff's Office) will be available by appointment only. The Martin County Sheriff's Office (entrance at the rear of the Governmental Center / Courthouse) will remain open to the public at this time. This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and remain in effect at least through Friday, May 1, 2020. The Martin County Senior Centers are closed. The Martin County Landfill and Martin County Airport remain open to the public.

Citizens are strongly encouraged to conduct county business online, by phone, by mail and through drop boxes. Taxes may be paid online at www.martincountyncgov.com or by mail. Water payments can be paid via mail or through a drop box located in the parking lot of the Martin County Governmental Center near the flagpoles. Completed Department of Social Services (DSS) applications may be placed in the drop box located near the entry door (near the "Social Services" sign) at 305 E. Main Street, at the back of the governmental center / courthouse.

The Martin County License Plate Agency remains closed to the public but open to dealers by appointment only. The Martin County Driver's License Office remains closed, but many common NCDMV services, such as driver license renewal and vehicle registration renewal can be performed any time and any place by visiting <https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv>.

Court facilities will continue to be available on an as-needed basis through the Sheriff's Office entrance. Most NC District and Superior Court cases are to be postponed until at least June 1, 2020 in response to COVID-19. For specific questions about individual cases, visit www.nccourts.gov or call the Martin County Clerk of Superior Court at 252-809-5100.

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