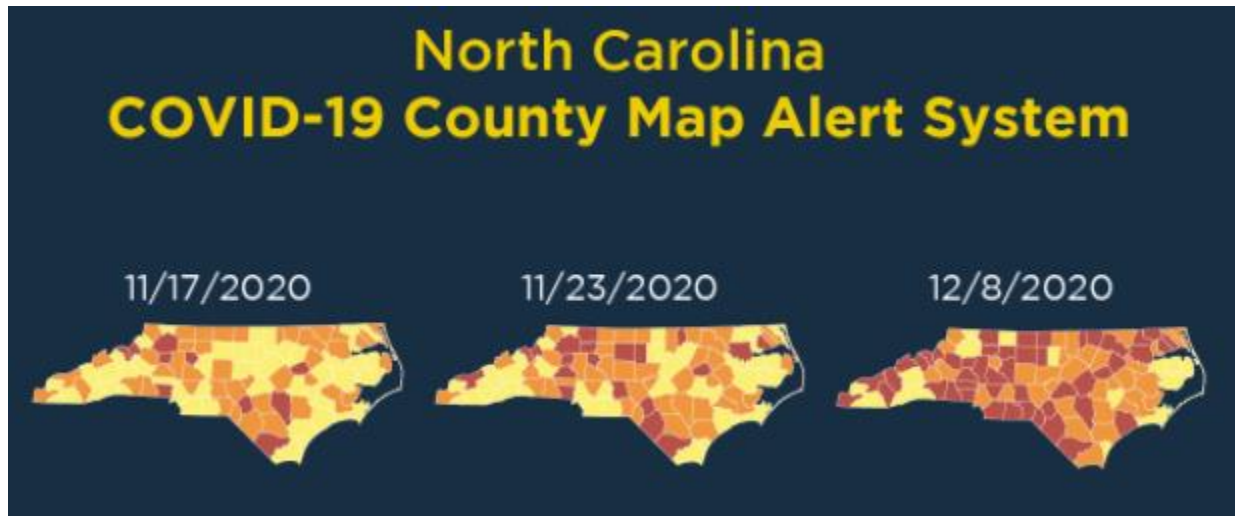**12.17.20**

North Carolina is experiencing record high numbers in COVID-19 cases reported daily, hospitalizations, and the percent of tests that are positive, indicating very high levels of viral spread across the state.

The COVID-19 County Alert System gives individuals, businesses and community organizations, and public officials a tool to understand how their county is faring and to make decisions about actions to slow the spread of the virus. The COVID-19 County Alert System uses metrics informed by the White House Coronavirus Task Force and North Carolina's key metrics to categorize counties into three tiers:

- Yellow: Significant Community Spread
- Orange: Substantial Community Spread
- Red: Critical Community Spread

The full report with county-by-county metrics is available at this link.

Pamlico County Metrics
The COVID-19 County Alert System uses a combination of metrics to determine whether a county meets criteria to be in the red or orange tier. These metrics provide information about the amount of viral spread and hospital impact in the county. **Pamlico County is currently in the Orange tier (substantial community spread),** and the recent increase in cases may move us to Red with the next update.

How Tiers are Determined
To be assigned to the red or orange tier, a county must meet the threshold for case rate for that tier AND the threshold for either percent positive OR hospital impact.
- Case Rate: The number of new cases in 14 days per 100,000 people, including a minimum number of cases to account for smaller counties like Pamlico.
- Percent Positive: The percent of tests that are positive over 14 days
- Hospital Impact: A composite score based on the impact that COVID-19 has had on hospitals, including percent of COVID-19 hospitalizations, COVID-19 related visits to the Emergency Department, staffed open hospital beds, and critical staffing shortages over 14 days. Pamlico County is assigned to Craven County where the majority of our hospital admissions occur.

	Counties must meet:		And meet one of these:
	Case rate	Percent positive	Hospital Impact within the county*
Critical (Red)	>200/100,000 new cases in 14 days with at least 42 cases in 14 days.	>10%	High Impact on county hospital(s)
Substantial (Orange)	101-200/100,000 new cases in 14 days with at least 21 cases in 14 days.	8-10%	Moderate Impact on county hospital(s)

What this means for Pamlico County and for you

The state has provided guidance about **what each of us can do** to reduce the spread of the virus in our community. You can see this guidance, along with guidance for businesses and local governments, at this link.

For Individuals in Red and Orange Counties (that's us!)
- Limit mixing between households and minimize the number of people in your social circle
- Avoid settings where people congregate, like outdoor bars and night spots
- If patronizing restaurants, consider ordering take out from restaurants and/or eating outdoors socially distanced
- Individuals who are high-risk for developing serious illness should consider staying at home as much as possible
- Reduce your public interactions to essential activities like going to work or school, caring for family members, buying food, getting health care or picking up medications

For all individuals
- Stay at home between 10pm and 5am, unless an exception applies (in accordance with Executive Order 181)
- Avoid holiday travel and limit physical contact with people who do not live with you
- Get the COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to you
- Wear a mask at all times outside the home and maintain physical distance from people who do not live in your household
- Follow guidance for celebrating winter holidays safely
- Download the SlowCOVIDNC app and share with friends and family; if you test positive, enter your pin into the app to notify close contacts to get tested
- Get a flu shot to decrease your risk of getting the flu and possible hospitalization
- Get tested if symptomatic or if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19
- Answer the call and participate in contact tracing
- Avoid large gatherings and crowds
- • If you choose to host or attend a gathering, limit attendance to 10 or fewer, host outdoors, and ventilate indoor spaces as much as possible (e.g., keep the windows open)

References:
https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/county-alert-system
https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/dashboard/COVID-19-County-Alert-System-Report.pdf

COVID-19 COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

The COVID-19 Community Task Force (CCTF) is a volunteer organization established to engage the community in responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic and to support and augment the County's efforts. The information shared by the CCTF is not an official communication from Pamlico County, its Health Department or the Pamlico County COVID19 Task Force.