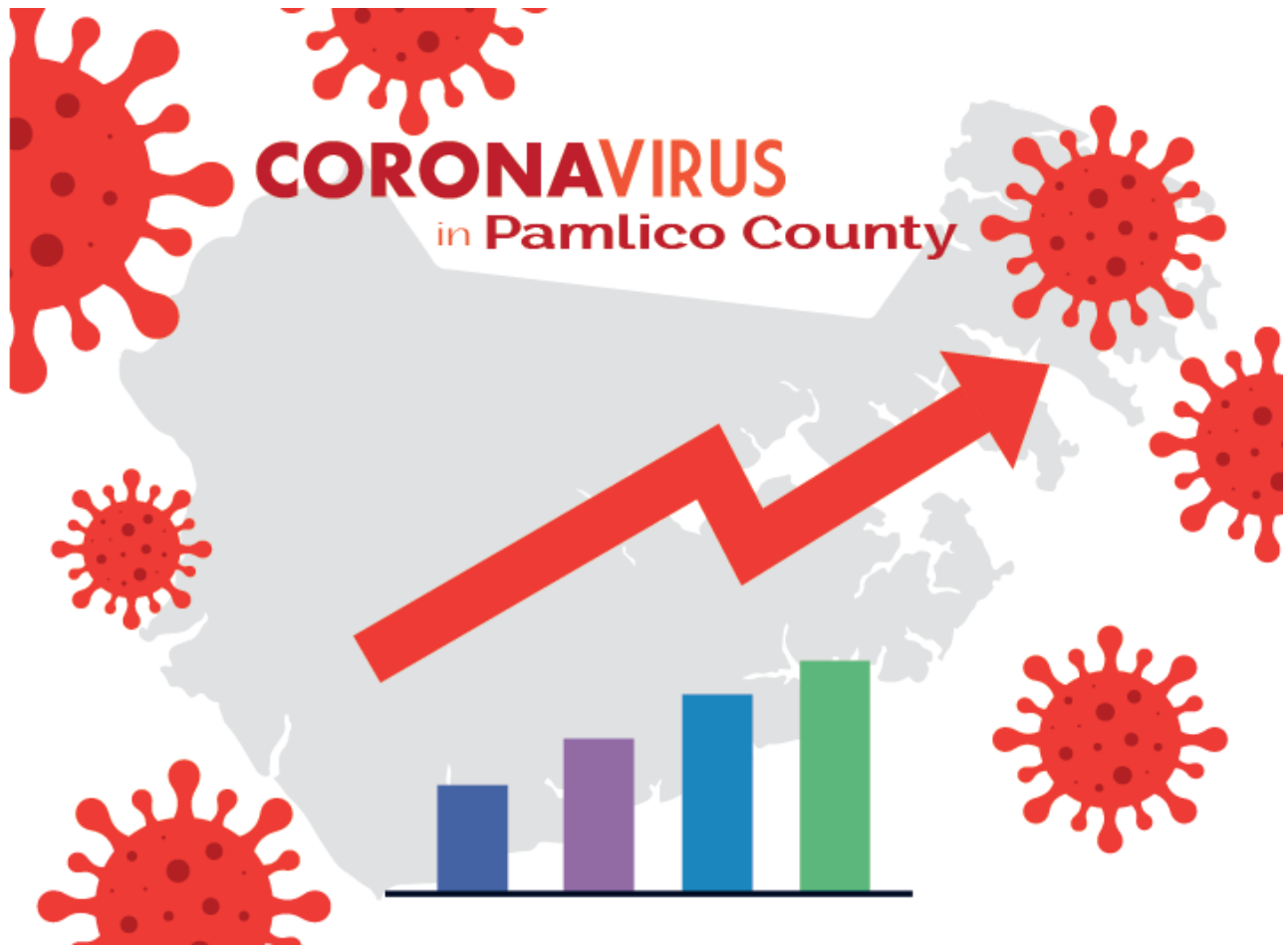
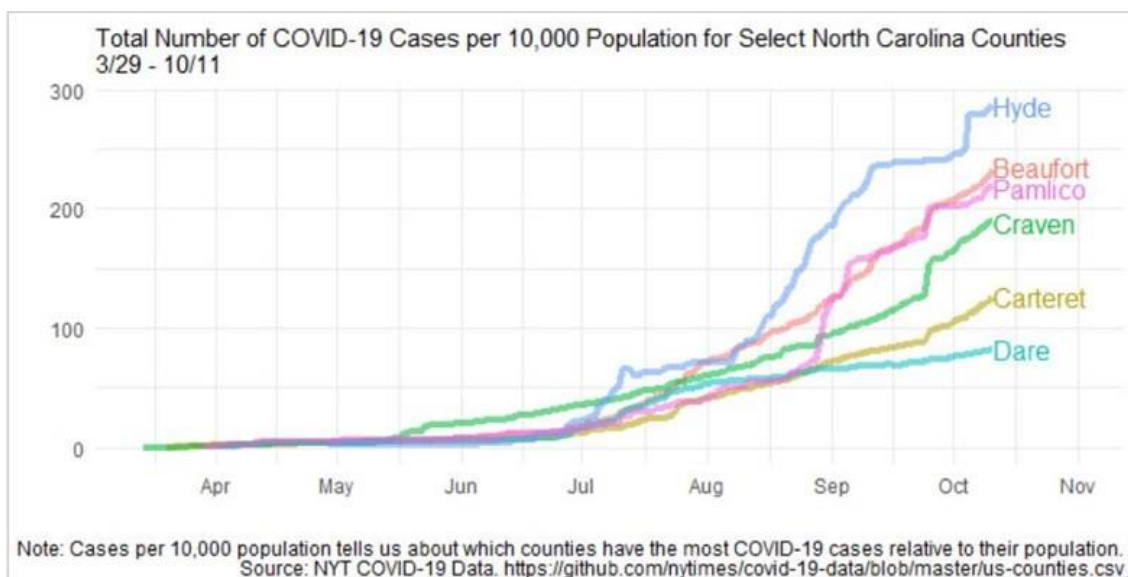


10.15.2020

Understanding the Rise in Pamlico County's COVID-19 Cases - and Actions You Can Take



Since September, Pamlico County has seen a marked increase in COVID-19 cases; since the beginning of October, 24 new cases have been identified in the County (as of 10/13). And while our number of cases may seem low, Pamlico County's cases-per-capita rate is higher than several nearby counties.



As of October 13, Pamlico County had reported 293 cases; 16 cases are still active, 177 have recovered, and 2 have resulted in death. 98 cases have been reported at the State Prison, 1 of which is active. Over 90% of positive cases in Pamlico County have occurred since the 4th of July.

- Most Pamlico County cases have been people age 25-49 (42% of total) and 50-64 (25% of total).
- Some people that contracted COVID-19 in Pamlico County also have chronic illnesses: 14% with diabetes, 10% with lung disease, and 12% with cardiovascular conditions.
- Pamlico County has a similar percentage of people that contracted COVID-19 (2,201 cases per 100,000) vs. statewide (2,229 cases per 100,000 population)
- Males make up a majority (61%) of cases in Pamlico County and are at a [higher risk for serious complications](#) from COVID-19.

In North Carolina, COVID-19 hospitalizations have topped more than 1,000 patients since Oct. 6, and new daily cases this month have reached levels not seen since a July peak. The recent increase in cases reminds us of the importance of social distancing, wearing a mask, managing chronic illnesses, and understanding risk factors for virus transmission. In other words, what YOU can do to change the rise of positive cases in our county.

Why have COVID-19 cases increased in Pamlico County? I heard the increase is mostly due to cases in the prison population.

While it is true that Pamlico County's incarcerated population accounts for a portion of the county's COVID-19 cases, many cases can be traced to the Fourth of July and Labor Day holidays and related family/friend gatherings, as well as an outbreak at a nursing home. Other cases are a result of "community spread" and cannot be traced to a specific cause.

Why should I be concerned about an outbreak at the prison or a nursing home?

Nursing homes and correctional facilities are interconnected parts of the Pamlico community, and Pamlico County residents work at these facilities and, like any of us, may contract the virus but not show any symptoms. Asymptomatic people can unknowingly spread the virus to others as they interact with others. Workers or visitors can unknowingly bring the virus into such a facility, and once the residents become infected, they can transmit the virus to visitors or other workers....who then carry it home. This is why it is so important to remain vigilant about the three W's: wear a mask, wash / sanitize your hands frequently, and wait / stay at a distance of at least 6 feet from others.

I have asthma, COPD, diabetes, coronary artery disease, or hypertension. What can I do to keep myself safe from COVID-19?

Living with a chronic disease during a pandemic can be difficult and scary. Many chronic conditions increase the risk of serious illness from COVID-19. If you or a loved one has any of these conditions, it's important to lower the risk of infection by staying home as much as possible and practicing the 3 Ws when you are away from home. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can also reduce your complications from known risk factors like [obesity](#) and lack of exercise. Find ways to stay active and reduce stress like reading a book, doing work around the house, or going for a walk in the neighborhood. Stay in touch with your health care provider so they can address your concerns and offer advice for managing underlying health conditions. Make sure you take your

medicines as prescribed and that you have a sufficient supply of medications.

I do not have any chronic illnesses. Does that mean I will not get COVID-19?

You can still get the COVID-19 disease caused by the virus even if you do not have any chronic illnesses. While you are less likely to have severe symptoms, you are not 100% guaranteed to have a mild case. And even people with mild cases or no symptoms can spread the virus to others in the community that may have greater risk from the disease.

I'm tired of staying home and staying apart. Why should I keep distancing myself from others?

Maintaining healthy connections and lifestyles has been a challenge during the pandemic. Without any effective vaccines or treatments for COVID-19, social distancing and wearing a mask are our best tools to keep the Pamlico community safe. Socializing safely is especially important during the current flu season and the upcoming holiday season to prevent another spike in cases. Getting both the [flu](#) and COVID-19 [increases your chances of severe illness](#). Although heart-warming, family holiday gatherings with friends and family from outside your home can potentially spread the virus.

Before attending any event or gathering, consider running through this [checklist](#) to determine how safe it is. We encourage you to find creative ways to connect during this difficult time. A quick phone call or text to a loved one can boost their mood; young children can write letters to their grandparents or elderly family members; and those that prefer outdoor activities can meet up at a park or in a backyard for a safe, socially distant gathering.

What can I do to stop this increase in cases?

Do not get complacent. Do not give up! When we let down our guard, the virus will take advantage of the opportunity to spread. The simple precautions you have heard for months are still our best defense:

- Wear a mask.
- Avoid large gatherings.
- If you meet up with friends and family, do it outside.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Distance yourself at least 6 feet from others.

It is up to all of us to keep our friends and neighbors safe.



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.