

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MOUNT ROGERS SUSPENDS CONTACT TRACING FOR COVID-19**

(Marion, Va.) – Mount Rogers Health District is making changes to the COVID-19 contact tracing process, effective immediately. This change is due to the increasing and high number of daily cases throughout the district.

Mount Rogers Health District will continue to investigate all COVID-19 cases, but will rely on infected individuals to reach out to their contacts and inform them of the need to quarantine. Information on isolation, quarantine, contact tracing, and other relevant COVID-19 topics is listed on the Mount Rogers website, <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/mount-rogers/>. Since health department staff will not be doing full contact tracing, they will no longer be able to provide work notes for those in quarantine.

“Unfortunately, the number of new COVID-19 cases per day has become so high that we are forced to resort to changing our tracing practices,” said Karen Shelton MD, Director of the Mount Rogers Health District. “We have hired dozens of case investigators and contact tracers, but transmission is too widespread to be able to continue as we have been.” All case investigators and contact tracers will continue to investigate new cases in the district.

“We spoke with our school superintendents today and advised them to go virtual for the remainder of the semester,” continued Shelton. “We hate to have to ask our schools to close because people will not take the necessary steps to stop disease transmission.”

“We are sounding the alarm,” said Shelton. “If you have not been taking COVID-19 seriously, now is the time. Our hospital systems are being stretched beyond capacity. Our public health system is being stretched beyond capacity. It is time for the community to take this threat – a threat to all of us – seriously. Change your behavior. Stay home. Wear a mask. We are terrified of what we will see in the coming weeks and months. A vaccine is on the horizon. Please do your part and help us save lives in our community.”

CDC guidance on case investigation and contact tracing prioritization can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/prioritization.html>. For more information about COVID-19, visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus).

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