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### **Lessons Learned from COVID-19 Investigations**

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** The Richland County Health Department is providing an update on the status of COVID-19 in Richland County. Currently, Department staff conducted contact investigations on a total of 21 cases between June and July, revealing nearly 100 close contacts.

Several of these cases have been identified specifically through effective contact tracing and were asymptomatic at the time they were named, but developed symptoms during quarantine. As such, the Department credits effective contact tracing for limiting the number of named contacts of these cases.

What the Department has learned from working with cases and contacts is that the virus spreads quickly within a household, but that wearing a mask, increased sanitizing, and social distancing are effective methods of preventing the spread of COVID-19 from an active positive case to their close contacts.

Unfortunately, these investigations also revealed that residents could be doing more to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community, particularly in regard to not going out when sick, staying home after being tested, and avoiding large gatherings.

It is imperative that Richland County residents follow instructions from the Health Department and healthcare providers. The following are important reminders:

- If you are not feeling well, particularly including symptoms of a dry cough, fever, shortness of breath, headache, and other cold-like symptoms, stay home until you feel better. This means that you do not go to work, do not attend regular activities, and cancel or postpone appointments.
- If you have been tested for COVID-19 for any reason, including preoperative testing, you must stay home until test results are received. This means that you do not go to work, do not attend regular activities, and cancel or postpone appointments.
- All residents should be practicing social distancing, including limiting the number of close contacts. This means avoiding large gatherings where social distancing is difficult. Wearing a mask in situations where social distancing is difficult is also recommended.

Together we can slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Please do your part so Richland County can recover socially and economically from this pandemic. Call the COVID Information Line at 406-433-6947 if you have any questions about COVID-19.