



Responding to COVID-19 in a college town
Annual Health Director's Legal Conference
April 16, 2021

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Appalachian District Health Department –about us

We are...

- Public health department serving Alleghany (tier 2), Ashe (tier 2), Watauga (tier 3) Counties
- Federally qualified health center serving primarily Alleghany and Ashe, with mobile dental services in Watauga
- Total district population 94,048 people (US Census Bureau, 2019)

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Boone, NC –home of App State University



- Watauga County pop: 56,177
- App State Enrollment 2020: 20,023
- On campus housing: 5,000 students
- Off campus houses majority of students

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Show your love and follow the **3Ws** *show your love*
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY
appstate.edu/recovery



WEAR
a face covering

FACE MASK REQUIRED AT ALL TIMES



WAIT
6 feet apart and
avoid close contact



WASH
your hands often or
use hand sanitizer



Co-branded materials in English and Spanish for each county posted [online at AppHealthCare](#) and throughout Downtown Boone, on Appalcart transit buses and campus. Logos were developed in partnership with App State Communications; Boone Sunrise Rotary sponsored Downtown Boone signage.

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A featured series with video recording posted on YouTube, organized by the [Boone Area Chamber of Commerce](#). The series began with COVID-19 prevention and Takeout Tuesdays in March, 2020 and transitioned to be a source for connection around vaccine efforts.

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Pictured above-Sanford Hall –May, 2020
Watauga Democrat in [16 Construction Workers at App State test positive for COVID-19](#); this is following a prior cluster of 40 subcontractors with COVID-19

Several residence halls were renovated and several new residence halls were constructed in 2020.

Appalachian State University Face Coverings Guidance

For release May 1, 2020

The presence of and continued spread of Covid-19 cases in the communities of Watauga and surrounding counties requires consistent measures to slow the spread of the virus. Protecting our shared workforces is critical to health, as well as to ensuring that construction projects remain safe and fully manned for completion on time and on budget.

Per Appalachian State University's Chancellor's guidance, *all Appalachian State University employees* will wear some form of face covering while in public and on project sites. This policy meets and exceeds North Carolina Governor's Executive Orders Numbers 131 & 135 issued on April 23, 2020 which require all individuals to wear face coverings when they cannot maintain 6 feet of social distance in public areas or work centers.

Per North Carolina Governor's Executive Orders 131 and 135, and Appalachian State University Chancellor's Guidance, the following *recommendations* are provided to **all Appalachian State University Contractors** to assist in limiting the potential exposure/spread of Covid-19 while on Appalachian State University project sites:

- Ensure that all project sites implement appropriate social distancing, enhanced hygiene and cleaning protocols, symptom screening of employees, accommodations for vulnerable workers, and provide education to employees and workers to combat misinformation.
- Continue to limit gatherings to no more than 10 people.
- Recommend consistent use of face coverings when 6 feet of distancing isn't possible. This includes work areas and meeting areas as well as in vehicles while commuting to and from the work site.

Thank you for your continued vigilance,

Jeff Pierce
Director
Planning, Design and Construction

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**Memorandum of Understanding Between
Appalachian District Health Department
and
Appalachian State University**

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered by and between Appalachian District Health Department ("AppHealthCare") and Appalachian State University ("University") for the purpose of implementing the COVID-19 Response and Mitigation Collaboration effort. The goals of this partnership are the following:

- To collaborate and address the impact of COVID-19, particularly regarding containment and mitigation strategies, contact tracing and investigation, isolation and quarantine support and proactive communication between the parties.
- To highlight the essential operational considerations of the relationship.
- To clarify the role that the University has in supporting local containment and mitigation efforts, including implementation of prescribed control measures.

Lessons learned

- There are many
- Be careful not to rely on history too much
- Detailed plan & the right people review

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Cases, investigations, and clusters

- COVID-19 response team
- Case investigators
 - AppHealthCare and CCTC
 - CCTC contact tracing
 - I&Q orders
- Public health nurses, lab, medical assistants focused on testing
- Calls with Appstate
 - Cross-referenced data
 - Testing
- Various points of contact for various concerns
- Testing when clusters occurred –public health staff
- High volume testing –public health staff & testing vendor on campus
- Benefits to supporting I&Q needs –food boxes, access to hotel rooms

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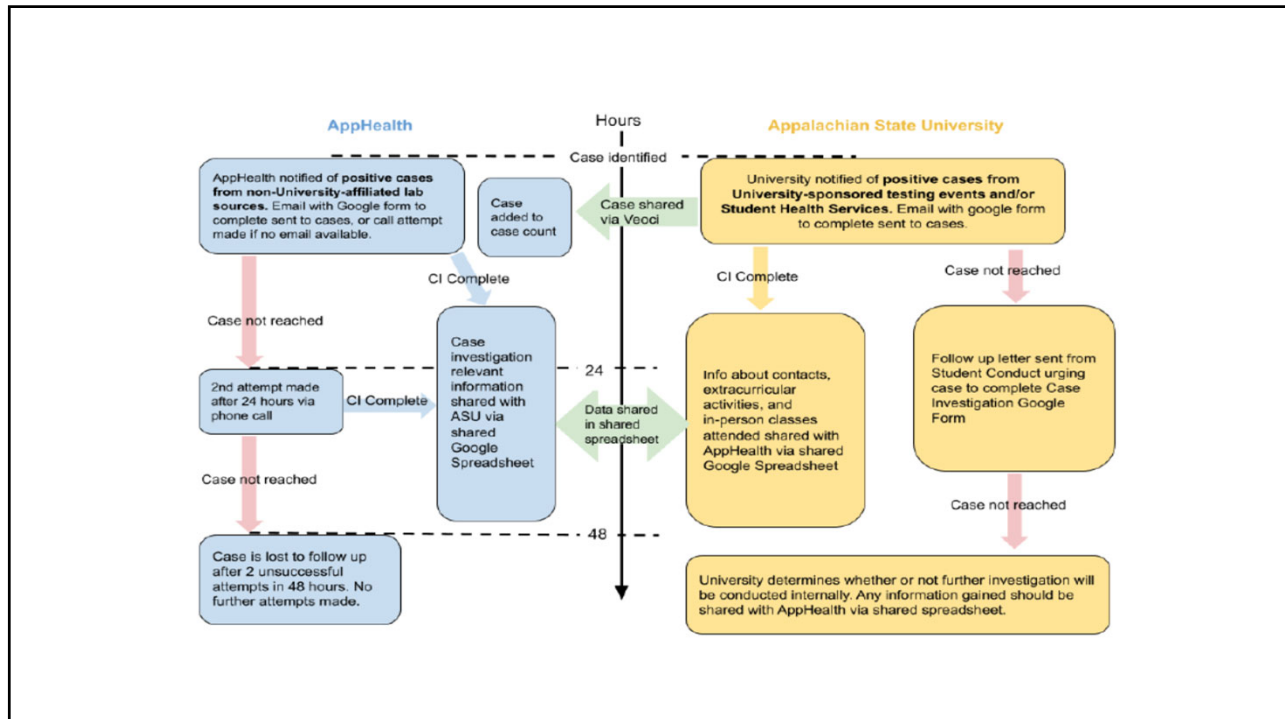
Cases, investigations, and clusters

- Office of the Dean of Students for non-compliant, non-responsive students
- Athletics needs its own discussion
- Challenges: ownership, support for data public health staff do not have access to review, enforcement of protocols, stronger language



Thank you to NC DPH for your support

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Email Template for Failure to Comply

Office of the Dean of Students
324 Plemons Student Union
203 Locust Street
ASU Box 32103
Boone, NC 28608-2103
(828) 262-2004
Fax: (828) 262-4997
www.deanofstudents.appstate.edu

To
Sent electronically to Positivecase@appstate.edu

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Regarding Case Number: 200000005 (Student ID #90000000)

Dear _____,

I hope this message finds you well. It has been reported by AppHealthCare (local public health) that you have been identified as having tested positive for COVID-19.

It is imperative that you complete your case investigation through the form linked here [AppHealthCare COVID-19 Patient Form](#) within the next 24 hours.

Allow 30 minutes to complete the form. Do NOT forward or share this link with others.

Completing this form will enable us to generate documentation to present to your employer if needed. Your answers will also enable us to connect you to various resources, if you need them.

The information you provide us with will remain confidential and will allow us to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in your community.

For more information about COVID including testing and vaccine information, please visit [App State COVID-19 NEW Updates](#) and or call 828-262-2000. This hotline is staffed Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., and may be accessed via the university's central phone number.

Thank you for your role in keeping your community safe!

Office of the Dean of Students
324 Plemons Student Union

- Email sent by Office of the Dean of Students
- Online electronic link to encourage more participation
- Referral to student conduct as appropriate

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Cottages of Boone housing complex featured. This became a site for COVID-19 testing. AppHealthCare conducted testing at the health department M, W, F and on campus or off campus cluster locations T, Th

AppHealthCare in partnership with University Highlands is offering

COVID-19 Testing Event

Wednesday | October 14
12pm-3pm
University Highlands

Testing is open for residents of University Highlands. There is no cost and you can be tested regardless of insurance status. If you have insurance, please bring a copy of your insurance information. Rapid tests will be available.

Please register at this link- tinyurl.com/yxqhe3pj

For questions, call the AppHealthCare COVID-19 Call Center
Monday - Friday, 8:00am-6:00pm
(828) 795-1970



www.AppHealthCare.com



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College life...

- <https://www.youtube.com/embed/c-8aSjmoe7w>

I am reaching out to you because we have received a large number of complaints, concerns and comments from the public and other businesses regarding the apparent lack of COVID-19 safety measures observed at your establishment over recent months. We are also aware that these same complaints have been made to NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Town of Boone Police Department. Additionally, we were discouraged to see recent photos of the September 26 Football Game Saturday held at your establishment especially given the prior conversation we had earlier in June and the cluster of cases that were previously associated with your facility in August.

COVID-19 cases have been on a drastic rise in our community, especially among 18-24 year old's. This illness has severe and even chronic consequences for around 20% of those that are infected.

To give some perspective, two (2) of our recent COVID positive cases identified as being at Rivers Street Ale House on September 26th as customers. Another four (4) COVID positive cases identified as having been at Rivers Street Ale House as customers since our September 25th case investigations of COVID positive cases, but they did not mention the specific date they were in your facility. Furthermore, AppHealthCare knows of another 2 cases in September that were at Rivers Street. Several of these eight (8) mentioned were not aware of having any close contacts with positive cases. Whether or not these individuals contracted the illness at Rivers Street Ale House cannot be determined but there are certainly concerns that it could be linked to the facility. Frankly put, River Street Ale House comes up in our case investigations more so than any other facility of its type in our three-county district.

Finally, a number of the positive cases that identified as having been at Rivers Street Ale House work in our other establishments which puts the employees and patrons of those establishments along with all those they come into contact with at risk as well.

- 1) Visit establishment; educate
- 2) Make a call; educate
- 3) Send a letter and offer to educate
- 4) Copy letter to others –Boone Police Department; NC DHHS

[Town of Boone emergency declarations](#)

It was helpful to have regular communication among county and town managers routinely –weekly meetings then calls started in March, 2020 and have continued

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Continuous communications

- [AppHealthCare dashboard](#)
- [App State dashboard](#)
- Weekly situation reports with an overview of data –including clusters
- Comparisons, drawn conclusions
 - Faculty
 - Local elected officials
 - Public schools and community metrics
 - Meetings with apartment complex owner/operators arranged by App State

Active Outbreaks & Clusters				
Data is current as of Thursday, March 25th				
Facility or Setting Type	Facility or Setting Name	Active Cases	Cumulative Cases	Last Positive Result
Institute of Higher Education	App State Raven Rocks Hall Residence Hall	0	13	03/13/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Lovill Hall Residence Hall	0	7	03/08/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Cone Hall Residence Hall	0	9	03/09/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State East Hall Residence Hall	1	8	03/17/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Thunder Hill Hall Residence Hall	0	15	03/11/2021
Residential Complex	The Cottages of Boone	0	19	03/08/2021
Residential Complex	University Highlands	1	17	03/17/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Dogwood Residence Hall	0	8	02/24/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Appalachian Panhellenic Residence Hall	0	7	03/9/2021

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We made it.
Here's to learning.
Here's to a brighter year ahead.

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