



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Department of Public Health

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***COVID-19 Update***  
**County, City and Health Officials Update Community**

FAYETTEVILLE – On Wednesday, Dec. 9, Cumberland County and City of Fayetteville leaders, along with health officials, presented a unified message during a press conference at the Judge E. Maurice Braswell Cumberland County Courthouse. The message was clear — only together can we slow the spread of COVID-19.

The speakers at the conference were:

Charles Evans, Chairman of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners

Mitch Colvin, Mayor of the City of Fayetteville

Dr. Jennifer Green, Cumberland County Health Director

Mike Nagowski, Cape Fear Valley Health CEO

Col. Sheryl Bedno, Fort Bragg Department of Public Health Director

Chairman Evans opened the conference with a plea to Cumberland County residents to not let their guard down in the fight against COVID-19 and to remember each case is more than just a number.

“More than 120 County residents have died from this virus,” Evans said. “I want everyone to remember—these cases are people. Our brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, friends and fellow citizens.”

Evans also urged residents to take personal responsibility when considering holiday plans.

“Wear a mask always when you are around people who do not live with you. Wait six feet apart and wash your hands often.”

Mayor Colvin asked residents to follow guidance from public health officials.

“My message is to the citizens of Fayetteville. We are walking through this together,” Colvin said. “Please listen to health officials and do the things they are telling us to do.”

Public Health reported various case data and provided information on the upcoming vaccination plan. Currently there are 10,843 positive cases and 124 deaths associated with COVID-19 in Cumberland County. The percentage of positive cases of those tested during the past two weeks is 9.6%. Along with community providers, Cumberland is testing more than 5,000 people each week.

“Today is the time to come together to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community,” said Dr. Green. “Fight alongside us.”

Nagowski said there are 60 patients currently hospitalized at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center with COVID-19, which is an all time high. More than 1,250 patients have been cared for at the center with COVID-19. The youngest patient to die from COVID-19 was 29 years old and the oldest patient was 109.

“I can pinpoint when the hospitalizations begin to rise. It’s after holidays,” Nagowski said. “It’s not an accident that after Thanksgiving we hit an all time high. We are holding our breath for the Christmas holidays.”

Col. Bedno discussed the measures Fort Bragg officials are doing to help educate soldiers and their families prior to the holidays. Soldiers are continually urged to wear a mask, wait six feet apart and wash their hands.

Cumberland County Health Department will know more about the quantity of vaccinations they will receive after the holidays. Cape Fear Valley is prepared to receive 5,000 doses of the vaccine next week, Nagowski said.

“I will take the vaccine the moment it’s available,” said Nagowski. “I am 100% confident.”

“The vaccine will be available to all who want it,” said Evans. “When it is my time to take the COVID-19 vaccine, I will, and I encourage you to take it as well.”

Together, Cumberland County will get through this.

### **Staying Updated**

Cumberland County has made it easy for you to stay updated on the latest information about COVID-19. You can visit our [COVID-19 webpage](#), which has a list of [COVID-19-related closures and service changes](#). The county is also sharing important information on its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.