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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Moore County Health Department Urges Residents to Stay Committed to COVID-19 Control Measures Ahead of Labor Day Weekend

Since it was first recognized as a legal holiday in 1894, Labor Day has served as a national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. Celebrated on the first Monday in September, Labor Day has also come to signify the unofficial end of Summer. Along with the weekend that precedes it, it's often been considered one of the last times each year to enjoy travel and activities associated with the summer season. This year, as positive COVID-19 case counts have continued to rise nationally and across our State, the Moore County Health Department encourages everyone to remain mindful of COVID-19 control measures ahead of the holiday weekend.

Moore County COVID-19 data shows that for 2020, following the two other major summer holidays - Memorial Day (May 25) and Independence Day (July 4), COVID-19 case counts rose significantly in both instances. For the two-week period that followed Memorial Day weekend, Moore County experienced a 40% increase in COVID-19 cases, going from a total of 197 cases on May 22nd to 277 cases on June 9th. A similar increase occurred following the July 4th holiday weekend. Cases went from 510 total cases on July 3rd to 684 on July 19th, a 34% increase.

"While it's hard to place blame solely on the summer holiday weekends being a cause for the increase of confirmed cases, they certainly can be a factor," says Health Director Robert Wittmann. "Numerous other factors come into play too, such as the State's movement toward reopening and increased testing. However, we do know that social gatherings and spread of the virus within households are big drivers of virus transmission, both of which can occur in abundance over a typical holiday weekend."

Earlier this week, Governor Roy Cooper announced that North Carolina would enter the "Safer at Home" Phase 2.5 under Executive Order #163 which includes the following provisions:

- Mass gathering limits will increase to 25 people indoors and 50 people outdoors from the current limit of 10 indoors and 25 outdoors.

"To Protect and Promote Health through Prevention and Control of Disease and Injury."
<http://www.moorecountync.gov/health/>

**Environmental Health
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- Playgrounds may open.
- Museums and aquariums may open at 50% capacity.
- Gyms and indoor exercise facilities, such as yoga studios, martial arts, and rock climbing, as well as skating rinks, bowling alleys, indoor basketball, volleyball etc., may open at 30% capacity.
- Bars, nightclubs, movie theaters, indoor entertainment facilities, amusement parks, dance halls will remain closed.
- Large venues remain subject to the mass gathering limits.

These changes become effective at 5PM on September 4th, just ahead of Labor Day Weekend.

Executive Order #147 also remains in effect, requiring North Carolinians (with some exceptions) to wear face coverings in public when social distancing is not possible.

“Phase 2.5 is a major step in reopening the State,” says Wittmann. “Coupled with the extended holiday weekend, the increased limits on mass gatherings, and the reopening of certain facilities, we encourage our residents to remain cautious and continue to adhere to control measures when they are in public.”

The Moore County Health Department continues to encourage everyone to **“Know Their W’s”**:

- **W**ear a cloth face covering if you will be around other people
- **W**ait six feet apart and avoid close contact
- **W**ash your hands often for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer

Moore County’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard can be found here:

<https://moorecounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/4c11e5bf79b64a6e9c8377d5129cc97c>

For more information about coronavirus and Moore County’s response, please visit www.moorecountync.gov/health, find us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter (@mocohealth).

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