



## SlowCOVIDNC App Talking Points – September 2020

SlowCOVIDNC is the official COVID-19 Exposure Notification app for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), launching September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. It leverages Bluetooth technology to let app users know if they may have been exposed to COVID-19, enabling them to quickly act to protect themselves and those in their community. SlowCOVIDNC allows users to be notified if they may have been in close contact with someone who has shared a positive COVID-19 test result through the app. Users can anonymously share a positive COVID-19 test result to notify others of exposure and help slow the spread of COVID-19.

### What is the SlowCOVIDNC app?

- Built on Apple™ and Google™ technology that protects user privacy and security.
- Does not collect or share personally identifying or location information.
- Provides automated Exposure Notification alerts
- Complements our existing contact tracing and testing
- Is free
- Uses smartphone technology created by Google™ and Apple™
- Developed by NCDHHS to help North Carolina residents protect themselves and their loved ones and slow the spread of the virus
- Download and use is 100% voluntary

### Why are we launching the SlowCOVIDNC app?

- Allows users to know if they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and quickly act to protect themselves, their loved ones and their communities
- Protect users' privacy and identity, while also slowing the spread of COVID-19

### How does it work?

1. Download the free SlowCOVIDNC Exposure Notification app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and enable Bluetooth and Exposure Notifications. Bluetooth must be on for the app to work.
2. After opting-in to receive notifications, the app will generate an anonymous token for the device. A token is a string of random letters which changes every 10-20 minutes and is never linked to identity or location, but is linked to date. This protects app user privacy and security.
3. Through Bluetooth, phones with the SlowCOVIDNC app work in the background (minimizing battery) to exchange these anonymous tokens every few minutes. Phones record how long they are near each other and the Bluetooth signal strength of their exchanges in order to estimate distance.
4. If an app user tests positive for COVID-19, the individual may obtain a unique PIN to submit in the app. This voluntary and anonymous reporting notifies others who have downloaded the app that they may have been in close contact with someone in the last 14 days who has tested positive.
5. PINs will be provided to app users who receive a positive COVID-19 test result through a web-based PIN Portal, by contacting the Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) call center, or by contacting their Local Health Department (LHD).
6. SlowCOVIDNC periodically downloads tokens from the server from the devices of users who have anonymously reported a positive test. Phones then use records of the signal strength and duration of exposures with those tokens to calculate risk and determine if an app user has met a threshold to receive an Exposure Notification.

### **What do we hope the SlowCOVIDNC app will do?**

- With widespread use of SlowCOVIDNC, we can slow the spread of COVID-19 in North Carolina.
- SlowCOVIDNC will proactively notify app users who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and provide them with recommended next steps, such as the need to self-quarantine and when to get tested.
- If an app user tests positive, they will receive relevant information from NCDHHS on how to safely self-isolate and protect their loved ones.

### **Privacy Protection**

- The SlowCOVIDNC app uses tokens, or strings of random letters which change every 10-20 minutes and is never linked to your identity or location.
- The SlowCOVIDNC app will never collect or store your location or personally identifiable information, but does collect and share dates related to exposures. Other SlowCOVIDNC app users may be able to infer identity based on the date provided.

### **What is the process for obtaining a PIN?**

- PINs will be provided to app users who receive a positive COVID-19 test result through a web-based PIN Portal, by contacting the Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) call center, or by contacting their Local Health Department (LHD).
- Local Health Departments can direct callers to contact Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) call center at 844-628-7223 from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. If callers would like to speak to a nurse, they can call 877-490-6642 from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m.
- These PINs will ensure only verified positive COVID-19 tests are able to be reported within the app.

### **How is Exposure Notification different than contact tracing?**

- If someone tests positive for COVID-19, a contact tracer from the local health department may reach out to that person to instruct them in communicable disease control measures and make sure they have the resources and support that they may need while staying at home. The contact tracer will ask the person who tested positive about anyone else they have recently been near or in close contact with. This will allow the contact tracer to reach people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and share any information and support they may need to stay at home until the risk of giving the virus to others has passed. Contact tracers will instruct the exposed person in appropriate communicable disease control measures, including quarantine requirements, based on information provided by the person with COVID-19 regarding the date of last known exposure and will offer additional support services for quarantine. Contact tracers will not share anyone's name or personal information. This information is confidential and remains private. We recommend that they talk to the contact tracer, who can offer additional guidance and support.
- The SlowCOVIDNC Exposure Notification app complements traditional contact tracing. The app can help anonymously notify contacts, including people that app users do not know or remember interacting with, allowing people to act quickly to protect themselves, their loved ones and their community, thereby reducing exposure and spread. With SlowCOVIDNC, persons who receive a notification are recommended to self-quarantine and are provided a length of quarantine based on the Bluetooth measurement of exposure date.
- Persons who receive a notification may also receive a phone call from their local health department because they have been identified through traditional contact tracing. They should speak with the contact tracer, who may have more specific information about the exposure and quarantine timeframe and can offer additional support services for quarantine.

### **Does SlowCOVIDNC work in other states?**

- Yes. The SlowCOVIDNC app communicates with apps from other states that are using the Google and Apple technology platform. So, if a SlowCOVIDNC app user is in close contact with someone using another state's app (whether in NC or while traveling in another state) that is compatible with SlowCOVIDNC, they will receive an Exposure Notification alert.

**What materials will you be providing / how will you market this?**

- In order to slow the spread and encourage North Carolinians to download SlowCOVIDNC, NCDHHS will work with Local Health Departments, state agencies, universities and other partners.
- NCDHHS will develop a toolkit of resources and collateral including videos, flyers, FAQs, and more to effectively and efficiently market the app. There will also be Spanish language collateral for partners to leverage.
- NCDHHS will continue to update the available resources on our website as needed to ensure we meet the needs of our North Carolina residents.

**If someone participated in Beta testing, will that person need to uninstall the Beta app and install the new official app?**

- Beta 2 testers will need to uninstall the Beta 2 app once the testing period is complete and reinstall the official app once it is live.