

Salmonella investigation underway at Davidson County barbecue restaurant; more than 30 sick

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LEXINGTON, N.C. — The Davidson County Health Department and Davie County Health Department are working with the N.C. Division of Public Health to investigate a gastrointestinal illness outbreak among patrons of a local restaurant.

As of Tuesday, the health departments said they have identified over 30 individuals with signs and symptoms consistent with salmonellosis.

The health departments said all people with symptoms ate at Tarheel Q, located at 6835 West U.S. 64, Lexington, several days before becoming ill.

“We have been working very closely with the health department to correct this,” said Trey Payne, owner of Tarheel Q, who has been working with health department officials trying to find the possible source. “We are making sure we are doing everything correct and all our procedures are correct and doing things like we are supposed to.”

At least seven of the individuals had to be hospitalized due to their illness, the health departments said.

“We are still investigating to determine the source (or sources) of infection. We are also actively working with restaurant management to resolve this as soon as possible,” said Davidson County Health Department Director Monécia Thomas. “We would like to thank the restaurant for their cooperation. The restaurant has been diligent and responsive during this process and we appreciate their commitment to the safety of their customers.”

Anyone who became ill with diarrhea within four days after eating at Tarheel Q on or after June 6 is asked to call the Davidson County Health Department at (336) 236-3096.

The Davidson County Health Department said it is opening a hotline for calls. Calls will be taken from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the remainder of the work week.

“Collecting this information is important to help officials determine the size and impact of the outbreak,” the health department said.

At this time, the restaurant has not been required by the state or local health department to close. To stop further spread of the illness, the health department has instructed the restaurant to implement specific control measures to ensure food temperatures are monitored and recorded prior to service.

Payne says he knows this will hurt his business and his employees livelihoods but says his top concern is those that are ill and hoping to rebuild the communities trust. "I hope [customers] will give us a chance to earn their trust back."

SOURCE: <http://myfox8.com/2015/06/23/salmonella-investigation-underway-at-davidson-county-barbecue-restaurant-more-than-30-sick/>