



Public Health
3070 11th Av Dr SE
Hickory, NC 28602
Telephone: (828) 695-5800
Fax: (828) 695-4410
www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth/

STATE RELEASES INFORMATION FROM NOROVIRUS INVESTIGATION

HICKORY, NC – Findings from a North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH) norovirus investigation in Catawba County determined that individuals who became ill after eating at Harbor Inn Seafood Restaurant in January were 27 times more likely to have eaten tossed salad than those who did not become ill.

“Our staff inspected the restaurant several times before these results were available and had already recommended improvements to prevent contamination of food,” said Doug Urland, health director, Catawba County Public Health. “These findings support those recommendations, which the restaurant has already put in place.”

Results were determined after a carefully conducted case-control study involving 110 individuals who ate at Harbor Inn between January 13 and January 22. The study compared 55 individuals who reported being sick to 55 individuals who did not get sick. Representatives from Catawba County Public Health and North Carolina Division of Public Health completed phone interviews using a survey developed for the case-control study. The survey asked patrons a comprehensive series of questions about menu items and activities associated with eating at Harbor Inn.

“Our goal with the study was to understand what caused the outbreak so we can prevent this from happening in the future,” said Dr. Megan Davies, state epidemiologist. “Although the study did not determine how the tossed salad was contaminated, food handling was likely a factor.”

Catawba County received a total of 166 reports of illness associated with Harbor Inn patrons eating between January 13 and January 29. The majority of reports were from people who ate the weekend of January 13. There have been no recent reports of illness associated with Harbor Inn, which is continuing to follow extra-stringent sanitation guidelines.

“This study helped us not only learn more about communicable disease at the local level, but also contribute to the state’s overall understanding of the spread and prevention of illness,” said Mr. Urland. “Because illness is common this time of year, we continue to encourage everyone to wash their hands frequently with soap and water and to stay home when sick.”

NCDPH will release an official report within the next 30 days, which will be made available at www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth/norovirus/.

###

“Leading the Way to a Healthier Community”



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.