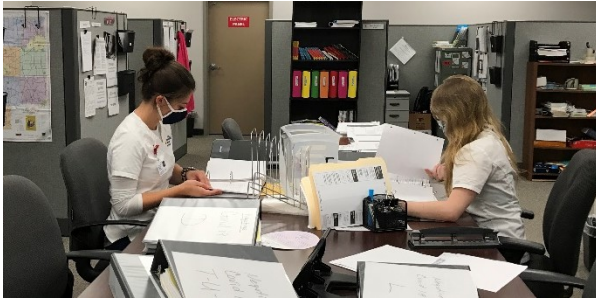


Community Nursing Students Help with Contact Tracing for Covid-19



From left to right, filing hard copies of contact tracing information: Alexandria Appledorn & Rachel Amos



From left to right, making phone calls to contacts: Noel Johnson, Cherie Flowers & Kelly Watson

During the summer 2020, community nursing students worked with Stark County Health Department to help break the chain of infection associated with Covid-19 through contact tracing. Contact tracing is a public health tool used to support those infected with the virus or have been exposed to the virus. Through contact tracing, individuals are assessed for access to care and are taught how to limit contact with others to slow the spread of the disease.

Nursing students were trained on the process of contact tracing by the Stark County Health Department. Over a 5 week period, students worked day or evening shifts to help with contact tracing phone calls. Daily, there were over 100 calls made to Stark County residents who may have been exposed to Covid-19, screening for symptoms of the virus as well as educating about its progression, the infectious period, and quarantine guidelines.

This service-learning opportunity arose when the School of Nursing was contacted by Amanda Uhler, BSN, RN, a University of Akron, nursing alumni (2011) who is now working for the Stark County Health Department as a unit manager. As a student, Ms. Uhler had clinical time with Stark County Health Department and decided her future was in public health. She is paying it forward to future nurses now and helping to teach the importance of community nursing and public health. Ms. Uhler stated there is value of having nursing students because the students are willing to help and learn as well as provide relief to the nursing staff of Stark County Health Department during this time of Covid-19.