



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

M. Norman Oliver, MD, MA
State Health Commissioner

Department of Health
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ORDER OF THE STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

Order of Public Health Emergency

WHEREAS, the State Health Commissioner declared COVID-19 a disease of public health threat on February 7, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Governor Ralph S. Northam declared a state of emergency due to COVID-19 on March 12, 2020, in Executive Order No. 51 by virtue of the authority vested in the Governor by Article V, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia and by §§ 44-146.17 and 44-75.1 of the *Code of Virginia*; and

WHEREAS, the Governor and State Health Commissioner issued Commonwealth of Virginia Amended Order of Public Health Emergency One on March 17, 2020, as amended on March 20, 2020, declaring a public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person, transmitted via respiratory droplets, and can be spread from an infected person who does not have symptoms to another person; and

WHEREAS, no current vaccine or known treatment options exist at this time; and

WHEREAS, first responders are in frequent close contact with individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 as a routine component of their job duties, and therefore are at increased risk to exposure to COVID-19 and as such could potentially transmit COVID-19 to co-workers, patients, or family members; and


WHEREAS, it is important to maintain this critical workforce; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that due to the continuing spread of COVID-19, the continued potential exposure to first responders may place their family or household members at increased risk for disease transmission; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia seeks to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Commonwealth, protect our first responders, and protect all Virginians that first responders serve; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § 32.1-13 of the *Code of Virginia*, the State Health Commissioner, acting for the State Board of Health when it is not in session pursuant to § 32.1-20 of the *Code of Virginia*, is vested with authority to make separate orders to meet any emergency not provided for by general regulations, for the purpose of suppressing conditions dangerous to the public health and communicable, contagious, and infectious diseases.

NOW THEREFORE, the State Health Commissioner hereby issues this Order directing the implementation of non-congregate sheltering to be available for the first responder population, where possible, to serve the first responder workforce (fire, EMS, Law Enforcement, Emergency Management, and certain Public Health workers in the field) who seek such shelter and to support this critical workforce as necessary.



M. Norman Oliver

4/9/20

Date