



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health
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**Declaration of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Infection
as a Communicable Disease of Public Health Threat for Virginia**

Whereas, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (termed “2019-nCoV”) that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and that continues to expand; and

Whereas, Chinese health officials have reported thousands of infections with 2019-nCoV in China, with the virus reportedly spreading from person-to-person, transmitted via respiratory droplets, in many parts of that country. Additionally, spread from an infected person who did not have symptoms to another person has been reported (i.e., asymptomatic spread); and

Whereas, human-to-human transmission has occurred in individuals within the United States; and

Whereas, outbreaks of novel viruses that can easily spread among people are always of public health concern; and

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

Whereas, these features of virulence, transmissibility, and potential magnitude of the effect on the health and welfare of the public meet the criteria for Exceptional Circumstances, as defined in 12VAC5-90-10; and

Whereas, isolation and quarantine can be necessary effective public health measures to control the spread of novel coronavirus;

I hereby declare that the 2019 Novel Coronavirus is considered a Communicable Disease of Public Health Threat. Therefore, the provisions of § 32.1 - 48.05 *et seq.* of the *Code of Virginia* may be invoked for public health investigations of persons known to have been, or suspected of having been, exposed to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or known to be, or suspected of being, infected with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, such that I may issue orders of isolation and/or quarantine as necessary and appropriate to control this infection in Virginia.

M. Norman Oliver, MD, MA
State Health Commissioner

7 February 2020
Date