



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health  
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RICHMOND, VA 23218

M. Norman Oliver, MD, MA  
State Health Commissioner

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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, the risk of disease transmission is particularly high in congregate settings such as homeless shelters, and places this highly vulnerable population at great risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 along with the staff and volunteers that serve them; and

WHEREAS, it is advised that to the extent possible, shelters serving persons experiencing homelessness adhere to social distancing recommendations, enhanced sanitizing practices on common surfaces, and other appropriate workplace guidance from state and federal authorities while in operation; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that due to the continuing spread of COVID-19, the capability of congregate shelters adhering to social distancing is not feasible due to increased case numbers; and

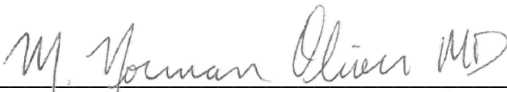
WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia seeks to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Commonwealth, protect our health care workers, protect all Virginians including those experiencing homelessness; and

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 of the homeless population, where possible, to serve the unsheltered homeless population and to support those persons experiencing homelessness currently being served in congregate settings. Congregate settings may continue to operate to serve the homeless population and shall maintain social distancing to the extent possible.

WHEREAS, this Order shall remain in full force and effect until terminated or rescinded.

Given under my hand this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 2020.

  
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M. Norman Oliver