



State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

April 1, 2022

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 256

EXTENDING CERTAIN HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PROVISIONS IN PREVIOUS EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, the undersigned issued Executive Order No. 116, 34 N.C. Reg. 1744-1749 (April 1, 2020), which declared a State of Emergency to coordinate the state's response and protective actions to address the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") public health emergency and to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors located in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States issued an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia, retroactive to March 1, 2020, and the President declared that the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States constitutes a national emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2020, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration, FEMA-4487-DR, for the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the people of North Carolina, the undersigned has issued Executive Order Nos. 116-122, 124-125, 129-131, 133-136, 138-144, 146-153, 155-157, 161-165, 169-177, 180-181, 183-185, 195, 197-198, 200, 204-207, 209-212, 215-217, 219-221, 224-225, 228-232, 234, 236, 238-240, 244-245 and 252-253; and

WHEREAS, the state has experienced a sustained period of decline of the daily number of diagnosed COVID-19 cases, COVID-19 associated hospitalizations, and emergency room visits for COVID-19-like symptoms; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services ("NCDHHS") recently modified its key COVID-19 metrics to also take into account wastewater surveillance data, vaccination and booster rates, prevalence of variants across the state, and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") identifying levels of community spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, these metrics, taken together, indicate declining COVID-19 transmission across North Carolina and declining severity of disease and hospital burden from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, however, COVID-19 continues to infect North Carolinians every day and new SARS-CoV-2 subvariants are emerging; and

WHEREAS, a State of Emergency remains in place for the purpose of maintaining the state's ability to meet challenges presented by COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, as of the date of this Executive Order, there have been more than two million six hundred and twenty-nine thousand (2,629,000) reported cases of COVID-19 in North Carolina, and more than twenty three thousand two hundred (23,200) people in North Carolina have died from the disease; and

WHEREAS, in Executive Order Nos. 130, 139 and 152, the undersigned, with the concurrence of the Council of State, determined that the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (the "Secretary") required authority to modify or waive enforcement of certain legal constraints or regulations which restrict the immediate relief of human suffering; and

WHEREAS, certain provisions of Executive Order Nos. 130 and 139 were extended by Executive Order Nos. 144, 148, 152, 165, 177, 193, 211, 225, 236, and 245 but these provisions are set to expire unless the undersigned takes further action; and

WHEREAS, to ensure that the state's health care system can effectively respond to current needs and any future surges in COVID-19 cases and associated hospitalizations, and for the other reasons specified herein, it is anticipated that the need for the remaining measures in Executive Orders Nos. 130 and 139 will continue until July 15, 2022; and

WHEREAS, statewide standing orders for testing, treatment, and vaccines are being utilized by providers across the state to increase access to COVID-19 diagnosis, mitigation and prevention services; and

WHEREAS, most schools do not have a medical provider on staff who can order COVID-19 testing in schools, and accordingly are reliant on the standing order to conduct school-based COVID-19 testing; and

WHEREAS, NCDHHS has requested that the General Assembly enact legislation to implement, on a long-term basis, certain regulatory flexibilities temporarily extended by this Executive Order; and

COVID-19 Vaccinations in North Carolina

WHEREAS, until enough North Carolinians are vaccinated, COVID-19 will continue to cause devastating illness and death; and

WHEREAS, rigorous clinical trials have demonstrated that the FDA-authorized and approved COVID-19 vaccinations are safe and effective; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 vaccines help protect people from severe illness, hospitalization and death and slow the spread of viral transmission and higher rates of COVID-19 vaccination in a community are associated with reduced hospitalizations and deaths; and

WHEREAS, the vaccine is free to all North Carolinians, regardless of insurance status; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 vaccines are now readily available for children ages five (5) and above; and

WHEREAS, with vaccines, treatment, and other tools to combat COVID-19 widely available, NCDHHS is adapting its response for the current stage of the pandemic, outlined in its "Moving Forward Together" endemic strategy plan; and

Regulatory Flexibility to Address COVID-19; Prohibitions on Excessive Pricing

WHEREAS, North Carolina and its mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse facilities and service providers need to take all reasonable actions to expand

capacity to improve the ability to efficiently respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby reducing the probability that the demand for care in North Carolina will outpace capacity; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, these actions have required and will continue to require temporarily waiving or modifying legal and regulatory constraints so that these mental health, developmental disability, and substance abuse facilities and service providers can maintain licensure and continue to provide necessary services; and

WHEREAS, decisions about adding and transferring resources continue to require real-time decision-making; and

WHEREAS, to continue to enable rapid decision-making, the undersigned has determined that it is in the best interest of the people of North Carolina to provide the Secretary with authority to modify or waive enforcement of certain legal and regulatory constraints as necessary in order to expand capacity and save lives; and

WHEREAS, for example, health care providers are needed to administer the COVID-19 vaccine, however, many individuals with medical training are not authorized to administer vaccines due to licensing requirements; accordingly, the undersigned wishes to remove any such barriers which would prevent or impair the ability of these medical personnel from assisting with vaccine administration; and

WHEREAS, to prevent barriers to vaccine administration, it is also critically important that those administering the vaccine, and those providing their property and facilities for purposes of vaccine administration, are provided with insulation from liability to the maximum extent permitted by law; and

WHEREAS, the process of vaccinating North Carolinians to levels sufficient to protect the population requires comprehensive and aggressive statewide efforts together with robust community participation; and

WHEREAS, accordingly, state officials are directed to marshal all available state property, equipment, and personnel towards facilitating the statewide vaccination effort; and

WHEREAS, the State Health Director has been assigned authority by the Secretary, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 130A-3, to exercise authorities under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 130A-5, including to investigate the causes of communicable disease affecting the public health in order to control and prevent those diseases, to provide, under the rules of the North Carolina Commission for Public Health, for the prevention, detection, reporting, and control of communicable diseases, and to develop and carry out health programs necessary for the protection and promotion of the public health and the control of diseases; and

WHEREAS, in Executive Order No. 245, the undersigned directed the State Health Director, in addition to and according to her authority in N.C. Gen. Stat. 130A, to issue any statewide standing order needed in her medical judgement to facilitate COVID-19 testing, vaccination, monoclonal antibodies and other therapeutic treatment; and

WHEREAS, the undersigned desires that the statewide standing orders for COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and therapeutic treatment continue through the effective date of this Executive Order; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 leaves North Carolinians vulnerable to price gouging on consumer goods needed to diagnose and treat COVID-19 and to respond to the pandemic, and the prohibitions on excessive pricing are in effect through the duration of this Executive Order; and

Statutory Authority and Determinations

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 116 invoked the Emergency Management Act, and authorizes the undersigned to exercise the powers and duties set forth therein to direct and aid in the response to, recovery from, and mitigation against emergencies; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.10(b)(2) the undersigned may make, amend, or rescind necessary orders, rules, and regulations within the limits of the authority conferred upon the Governor in the Emergency Management Act; and

WHEREAS, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.10(b)(3) authorizes and empowers the undersigned to delegate any Gubernatorial vested authority under the Emergency Management Act and to provide for the subdelegation of any authority; and

WHEREAS, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.10(b)(4) gives the undersigned the authority to “cooperate and coordinate” with the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.10(b)(7) the undersigned is authorized and empowered to utilize the services, equipment, supplies, and facilities of departments, offices, and agencies of the state in response to the emergency; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.30(a)(1) the undersigned may utilize all available state resources as reasonably necessary to cope with an emergency, including the transfer and direction of personnel or functions of state agencies or units thereof for the purpose of performing or facilitating emergency services; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.30(a)(2) the undersigned may take such action and give such directions to state and local law enforcement officers and agencies as may be reasonable and necessary for the purpose of securing compliance with the provisions of the Emergency Management Act and with the orders, rules, and regulations made thereunder; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.30(b)(2), the undersigned, with the concurrence of the Council of State, may establish a system of economic controls over all resources, materials, and services, including shelter and rents; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.30(b)(4), the undersigned, with the concurrence of the Council of State, may waive a provision of any regulation or ordinance of a state agency or political subdivision which restricts the immediate relief of human suffering; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.30(b)(5), the undersigned, with the concurrence of the Council of State, may perform and exercise such other functions, powers, and duties as are necessary to promote and secure the safety and protection of the civilian population; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.23, in conjunction with N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 75-37 and 75-38, the undersigned may issue a declaration that shall trigger the prohibitions against excessive pricing during states of disaster, states of emergency, or normal market disruptions; and

WHEREAS, the undersigned has sought and obtained concurrence from the Council of State on the provisions of this Executive Order requiring concurrence, consistent with the Governor’s emergency powers authority in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.30; and

WHEREAS, all the authority granted by this Executive Order is intended to be temporary, and the waivers and modifications of enforcement set out in this Executive Order are intended to extend only through the period where they are needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE, by the authority vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of North Carolina, and for the reasons and pursuant to the authority in Executive Orders Nos. 130, 139, 144, 148, 152, 165, 177, 193, 211, 225, 236, and 245, **IT IS ORDERED**:

Section I. Extension of Executive Order No. 152.

To meet the goal of providing health care, public health, and human services during the COVID-19 pandemic, which includes the administration of FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines, and to protect and save lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, the undersigned orders as follows:

Executive Order No. 152, as amended by Executive Order No. 165 and as extended by Executive Order No. 177, and as further modified and extended by Executive Order Nos. 193, 211, 225, 236, and 245, is extended by this Executive Order, and is to be in effect through July 15, 2022.

For avoidance of doubt, the preceding sentence also extends through the listed date the provisions of Executive Orders Nos. 130 and 139 that were previously extended by Executive Orders Nos. 193, 211, 225, 236, and 245 and have not been rescinded by this Executive Order.

References to "September 22, 2020," "November 20, 2020," "February 11, 2021," "February 18, 2021," "May 10, 2021," "August 8, 2021," "October 5, 2021," "January 5, 2022," or "April 5, 2022" in Executive Orders Nos. 152, 165, 177, 193, 211, 225, 236, and 245 shall be replaced with "July 15, 2022."

Section II. Statewide Standing Orders for COVID-19 Testing, Vaccination, Monoclonal Antibodies, and other COVID-19 Therapeutics.

- A. **Statewide Standing Order for COVID-19 Testing.** In order to further protect the public health by providing greater access to COVID-19 testing, the undersigned orders the State Health Director, in addition to and in accordance with her powers set out in N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 130A, to issue any statewide standing order needed in her medical judgment that would allow individuals who meet NCDHHS criteria for testing to access and undergo testing for COVID-19, subject to the terms of the standing order.
- B. **Statewide Standing Order for COVID-19 Vaccination.** In order to further protect public health by providing greater access to COVID-19 vaccines, the undersigned orders the State Health Director, consistent with her powers set out in N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 130A, to issue such statewide standing orders as needed in her medical judgment that would allow individuals eligible for vaccinations to access and receive a COVID-19 vaccination, subject to the terms of the standing order.
- C. **Statewide Standing Order for COVID-19 Therapeutics.** In order to further protect the public health by providing greater access to COVID-19 prevention or treatment, the undersigned orders the State Health Director, in addition to and in accordance with her powers set out in N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 130A, to issue any statewide standing order needed in her medical judgment that would allow individuals who meet the criteria in the Food and Drug Administration Emergency Use Authorization or Approval specific to the therapy to access and receive monoclonal antibodies, or who meet the criteria in the Food and Drug Administration Emergency Use Authorization or Approval specific to the therapy of any other therapeutic intended to prevent or treat COVID-19, subject to the terms of the standing order.
- D. **Amendment.** Subsections 3(C)(1)-(2) of Executive Order No. 130 and Subsections 2(B)(1)-(2) of Executive Order No. 193 are each amended to read as follows:
 1. All persons who are licensed or otherwise authorized under an Executive Order to perform vaccinations, COVID-19 testing, or administer FDA- authorized or approved therapeutics intended to prevent or treat COVID-19 or issue medical standing orders for vaccinations, testing, or the administration of antibody therapeutics intended to prevent or treat COVID-19, to the extent they are providing emergency services, therefore constitute "emergency management workers" to the extent allowed under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.60(e).
 2. Therefore, the undersigned intends that all such emergency management workers should be insulated from civil liability to the maximum extent authorized by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.60, except in cases of willful misconduct, gross negligence, or bad faith.

Section III. Extension of Prohibition on Price Gouging.

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.23, the prohibition against excessive pricing is hereby extended, as provided in N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 75-37 and 75-38, through July 15, 2022.

The undersigned encourages the North Carolina Attorney General to use all resources available to monitor reports of abusive trade practices towards consumers and make readily available opportunities to report to the public any price gouging and unfair or deceptive trade practices under Chapter 75 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Section IV. Distribution.

I hereby order that this Executive Order be: (1) distributed to the news media and other organizations calculated to bring its contents to the attention of the general public; (2) promptly filed with the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, the Secretary of State, and the superior court clerks in the counties to which it applies, unless the circumstances of the State of Emergency would prevent or impede such filing; and (3) distributed to others as necessary to ensure proper implementation of this Executive Order.

Section V. Effective Date.

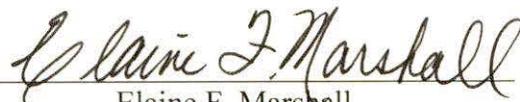
This Executive Order is effective immediately and this Executive Order shall remain in effect through July 15, 2022, unless rescinded or replaced with a superseding Executive Order. An Executive Order rescinding the Declaration of the State of Emergency will automatically rescind this Executive Order.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in the City of Raleigh, this 1st day of April in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-two.



Roy Cooper
Governor

ATTEST:



Elaine F. Marshall
Secretary of State

