

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH
SECRETARY

ELIZABETH C. TILSON, MD, MPH
STATE HEALTH DIRECTOR
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

March 31, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

As North Carolina State Health Director, I, Dr. Elizabeth Tilson, direct that the state, counties and any other jurisdictions take appropriate measures to mitigate and respond to the COVID-19 disease pandemic that is affecting our state, country and the world. These measures should include plans for non-congregate housing, which will provide housing solutions to protect human life and minimize hospital surge. If drastic measures are not taken, the lives of our fellow North Carolinians are at stake.

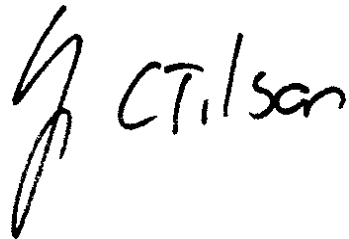
The respiratory disease named “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”), caused by a novel coronavirus named “SARS-CoV-2”, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) has been and continues to monitor COVID-19, conduct testing with local and federal partners, and provide guidance and resources to prevent, detect and respond to the occurrence of COVID-19 cases in North Carolina. On March 10, 2020, Governor Cooper issued Executive Order 116, declaring a state of emergency to coordinate response and protective actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Between March 14 – March 23, the Governor issued Executive Orders 117, 118, and 120, closing schools, dine-in services and some businesses in an effort to create additional social distancing.

North Carolina now has widespread community transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, the State is moving to a different phase of our response efforts and will be further increasing our population-based community mitigation strategies. The goal of mitigation is to decrease spread of the virus among our population – especially for those who are at highest risk of clinical severity– so fewer people need medical care at the same time. On March 27, the Governor issued Executive Order 121, a statewide Stay at Home Order to begin Monday, March 30, 2020 at 5 p.m. until April 29, 2020, directing people to stay at home except to visit essential businesses, to exercise outdoors or to help a family member. Specifically, the order bans gatherings of more than 10 people and directs everyone to physically stay at least six feet apart from others.

Consistent with Executive Orders and guidance issued by NCDHHS and federal partners, the state, counties, and any other jurisdiction appropriate should create clear procedures for social distancing, quarantining and isolating individuals at an elevated risk—quarantining individuals at greatest risk for complications due to COVID-19, isolating those who are symptomatic, and/or have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in non-congregate settings-- individual rooms, if possible-- and have them avoid common areas.

Thereby in my authority as North Carolina's State Health Director, I hereby direct state, counties and any other jurisdictions to take appropriate measures to mitigate and respond to the COVID-19 disease pandemic that is affecting our state, country and the world, including creating plans for non-congregate sheltering of individuals and households at risk for contracting and spreading COVID-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Cuervo Tilson". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Elizabeth Cuervo Tilson, MD, MPH, FAAP, FACPM
State Health Director
Chief Medical Officer
NC Department of Health and Human Services