

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

NED LAMONT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 11C

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC – AUTHORITY TO RESTRICT VISITATION IN CERTAIN CONGREGATE SETTINGS TO LIMIT TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, I declared public health and civil preparedness emergencies throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, on September 1, 2020, I renewed the March 10, 2020 declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergencies and also issued new declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, which new and renewed emergencies remained in effect until February 9, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on January 26, 2021, I renewed the March 10, 2020 and September 1, 2020 declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies and also issued new declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, which new and renewed emergencies shall run concurrently and remain in effect until April 20, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on March 31, 2021, I signed into law Special Act 21-2, through which the General Assembly ratified the previously mentioned declarations and endorsed a renewal and extension of such declarations through May 20, 2021; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to such declarations, I have issued various executive orders to protect public health, limit transmission of COVID-19, and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (the “COVID-19 Orders”); and

WHEREAS, on April 19, 2021, I renewed the March 10, 2020 and September 1, 2020 declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies and also issued new declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, which new and renewed emergencies shall run concurrently and remain in effect until through May 20, 2021; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic remains a grave threat to public health and safety and civil preparedness in the State of Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, public health experts have determined that it is possible to transmit COVID-19 even before a person shows symptoms and through aerosol transmission; and transmission or “shedding” of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 may be most virulent before a person shows any symptoms; and

WHEREAS, the CDC has recommended that people with mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19 be assumed to be infected with the disease; and

WHEREAS, to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend implementation of community mitigation strategies to slow transmission of COVID-19, including limitation on the size of gatherings, maintaining a safe distance from others, and wearing masks or face coverings; and

WHEREAS, because COVID-19 has caused unanticipated health effects that are not fully understood by the medical community, residents, businesses, and government, agencies face new and unanticipated economic, fiscal, and operational challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, infections with highly transmissible variants of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 have spread widely in the United Kingdom and elsewhere and have been discovered in Connecticut and other states, increasing the risk of greater transmission of COVID-19 throughout Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, an in-person investigation by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) of a report that a child has allegedly been abused or neglected is likely to increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, in some cases DCF can fulfill its statutory obligations to investigate child abuse or neglect using alternate means of communication; and

WHEREAS, DCF staff may be reduced as a result of illness or need to self-isolate due to COVID-19 and may need additional time to complete an investigation of child abuse or neglect, to disclose the results of such investigation and to respond to record requests; and

WHEREAS, Sections 17a-10a and 17a-16 of the Connecticut General Statutes require the Commissioner of DCF to provide visitation with children in facilities that treat children or youth with psychiatric disabilities and with children in such facilities to protect the health and safety of the children and staff; and

WHEREAS, no vaccines have been authorized for children under age 16, meaning that children in DCF care will continue to be at greater risk for infection; and

WHEREAS, in the Solnit Children's Centers, due to the proximity of the children to each other, if a person who is infected has an in person visit with a child in the facility, it poses a risk for all the other children in the facility; and

WHEREAS, virtual visitation has proven to be a viable alternative to an in-person visit for individuals who have been exposed to, have symptoms of, or are diagnosed with COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Section 17a-547 of the Connecticut General Statutes governs the rights of patients to receive visitors at regular visiting hours at inpatient and outpatient hospitals, clinics, or other facilities for the diagnosis, observation or treatment of persons with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Section 17a-547 of the Connecticut General Statutes governs the rights of persons under the supervisions of the Commissioner of Developmental Services to Communicate freely and privately with any person; and

WHEREAS, in order to protect the health and safety of certain residents in congregate facilities and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in such settings, I have issued various executive orders that authorized the restriction of visitation in such facilities and for the foregoing reasons remain necessary; and

WHEREAS, because of the changing circumstances and the evolving nature of the pandemic and the resulting evolution of measures taken in response to it, consolidation of such orders regarding visitation would assist the public and agencies in complying with and administering the current rules and assist the General Assembly in planning for continuing or future safety measures;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, NED LAMONT, Governor of the State of Connecticut, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Connecticut, and pursuant to the public health and civil preparedness emergencies declared on March 10, 2020 and renewed on September 1, 2020, January 26, 2021, and April 19, 2021, and the new public health and civil preparedness emergencies declared on April 19, 2021, do hereby **ORDER AND DIRECT**:

1. **Temporary Modification of In-Person Investigative Visits and Extension of Time to Commence and Complete an Investigation of Child Abuse or Neglect Conducted by the Department of Children and Families.** Section 17a-101g of the Connecticut General Statutes is modified so that, in the event that a household member has been exposed to, has symptoms of, or has been diagnosed with COVID-

19 , the Department of Children and Families may determine if an in-home visit is required to investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect and if alternate means of communication are available. Section 17a-101g of the Connecticut General Statutes is further modified to allow for good faith efforts to complete investigations within 33 business days and to make good faith efforts to respond to all reports other than emergency reports within 72 hours.

2. **Limits on Visitation with Children Placed in the Care and Custody of the Department of Children and Families.** Notwithstanding Section 17a-10a of the Connecticut General Statutes or any other statute, regulation, local rule or ordinance or provision of law, the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families may arrange for parents and guardians to engage in virtual, rather than in-person, visitation with children placed in the care and custody of the commissioner pursuant to an order of temporary custody or an order of commitment, during the period of quarantine or isolation as recommended by the Connecticut Department of Public Health when a visit participant or household member has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been exposed to or diagnosed with COVID-19. This order supersedes and replaces Executive Order No. 7I, Section 6.
3. **Limits on Visitors to Facilities that Treat Children or Youth with Psychiatric Disabilities.** Notwithstanding Section 17a-16 of the Connecticut General Statutes or any other statute, regulation, local rule or ordinance or provision of law, the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families and the head of a facility or institution under the Commissioner's jurisdiction the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families may arrange for parents and guardians to engage in virtual, rather than in-person, visitation with children placed in Department of Children and Families facilities, as defined in Section 17a-32 of the Connecticut General Statutes, including the Albert J. Solnit Children's Center – South Campus, and the Albert J. Solnit Children's Center – North Campus, during the period of quarantine or isolation as recommended by the Connecticut Department of Public Health when a visit participant has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been exposed to or diagnosed with COVID-19. This order supersedes and replaces Executive Order No. 7I, Section 7.
4. **Limits on Visitors to the Southbury Training School.** Notwithstanding Section 17a-238 of the of the Connecticut General Statutes or any other statute, regulation, local rule or ordinance or provision of law, the Commissioners Developmental Services, after consulting with the Commissioner of Public Health as necessary, may issue any and all orders restricting entrance into facilities, as referenced in Section 17a-231 (1), the Southbury Training School and any other facility operated by the Department of Developmental Services that the Commissioner deems necessary to protect the health and welfare of patients, residents and staff. This order supersedes Executive Order No. 7C, Section 9.

Unless otherwise provided herein, this order shall take effect immediately and remain in effect through May 20, 2021.

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut, this 19th day of April, 2021.



Ned Lamont
Governor

By His Excellency's Command



Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State

