

**Message from Kody H. Kinsley**, Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health & IDD, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

**Members of State and Local CFACs, BHIDD Provider Partners, Brain Injury Advisory Council, the Commission on MH/DD/SAS, and LME/MCO CEOs,**

Thanks to the over 1600 consumers for joining us on our call yesterday. We are getting into a drum beat of offering weekly calls with Consumers, Providers, and LME/MCOs. Our ask is that we keep provider questions on the provider call to try and free up the consumer call to focus on consumer questions and concerns. We recognize there is a lot of uncertainty and question, and we will be pushing out more information soon and having more calls to help folks get more clarity.

There have been a few questions about Governor Cooper's Executive Order restricting visitation at Group Homes. This applies to all group homes. Thank you for taking every action you need to keep those you serve safe.

Here are additional updates:

**STAKEHOLDER UPDATE**

We have several updates to share on North Carolina's response to COVID-19. Below is a list of highlights. It is by no means exhaustive. Please be sure to check the [latest update page](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus) [[ncdhhs.gov](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus)] and review the information provided on [[ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus)].

1. Governor Cooper Issues a New Executive Order
2. CDC Updates List of Who is High Risk
3. Secretary Cohen Calls for Health Care Volunteers
4. NC Pushes for Federal Changes to Make Food, Healthcare More Accessible
5. Hospitals Urged to Cancel Elective and Non-urgent Procedures and Surgeries
6. Medicaid Changes Policies to Encourage Telemedicine

**Governor Cooper Issues a New Executive Order**

Governor Roy Cooper ordered tighter limits on gatherings and extended school closures statewide to May 15, 2020. The order also closed some businesses that require close social interaction and limited visitors to long-term care centers. The Executive Order ban crowds of more than 50 people and requires certain businesses to close, such as movie theaters, hair salons, health clubs and more.

Grocery stores and restaurants providing takeout and delivery will remain open. Additionally, Governor Cooper reminded North Carolinians to show restraint in buying groceries and supplies.

The May 15 school closure date is based on current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- [Executive Order](#)
- [Press Release](#)

### **CDC Updates List of Who is High Risk**

On March 22, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated who is at high-risk for more severe illness from COVID-19. This is a new disease and we continue to learn about it as new information becomes available.

- [CDC Guidance for Who is High Risk for Severe Illness \[cdc.gov\]](#)

### **Secretary Cohen Calls for Health Care Volunteers**

With COVID-19 now in North Carolina, we need to bolster our health care system to ensure we can care for those impacted by the virus. A crucial part of that effort is recruiting volunteers to supplement our health care workforce – including doctors and nurses, pharmacy, imaging and respiratory care, and facility maintenance and administrative support workers and others. We are also asking volunteers to provide medical supplies if they are able, including personal protective equipment.

- [Letter calling for volunteers](#)

### **NC Pushes for Federal Changes to Make Food, Healthcare More Accessible**

Governor Cooper has asked for waivers so children and families who are food insecure can access resources for meals. He also asked the federal government to waive certain requirements of the Medicaid program to help pay for care that may extend longer than usual during the crisis. Waivers are intended to reduce burden on Medicaid and NC Health Choice providers such as doctors and hospitals as well as beneficiaries

- [Press Release \[ncdhhs.gov\]](#)
- [Letter to President Trump](#)

### **Hospitals Urged to Cancel Elective and Non-urgent Procedures and Surgeries**

Effective March 23rd, 2020, as part of a unified response, Secretary Cohen requested all hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers suspend all elective and non-urgent procedures and surgeries. Elective and non-urgent procedures and surgeries are defined as any procedure or surgery that if not done within the next 4 weeks would not cause harm to the patient.

- [Letter on Elective and Non-urgent Procedures and Surgeries](#)

### **Medicaid Changes Policies to Encourage Telemedicine**

Effective Monday, March 23, 2020, Medicaid temporarily modified its Telemedicine and Telepsychiatry Clinical Coverage Policies to better enable the delivery of remote care to Medicaid beneficiaries. In addition to telephone conversations and secure electronic messaging, the modifications will include the use of two-way real-time interactive audio and video to provide

and support physical and behavioral health care when participants are in different physical locations.

- [Press Release \[ncdhhs.gov\]](#)
- [SPECIAL BULLETIN COVID-19 #9: Telehealth Provisions - Clinical Policy Modification \[medicaid.ncdhhs.gov\]](#)

**Kody H. Kinsley**

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