

**FILED**

**MAR 14 2020**

DCF Department Clerk

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**IN RE: EMERGENCY SUSPENSION OF  
STATUTES, RULES, AND OTHER  
ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN  
RESPONSE TO COVID-19, A PUBLIC  
HEALTH EMERGENCY**

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**RENDITION NO.: DCF-20-036EO**

**EMERGENCY ORDER**  
(COVID-19 Public Health Emergency)

**WHEREAS**, on March 1, 2020, Governor of Florida **RON DESANTIS** issued Executive Order number 20-51 directing the Florida State Health Officer and Surgeon General to declare a Public Health Emergency for COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 1, 2020, the State Surgeon General and State Health Officer declared a Public Health Emergency exists in the State of Florida as a result of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 9, 2020, Governor of Florida **RON DESANTIS** issued Executive Order 20-52 declaring a state of emergency in the State of Florida due to the immediate danger to the public health, safety and welfare created by COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, Florida has experienced positive cases for COVID-19, and it poses a risk to the entire state of Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump has declared a national emergency related to the COVID-19 crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDC currently recommends community preparedness and everyday prevention measures be taken by all individuals and families in the United States, including voluntary home isolation when individuals are sick with respiratory symptoms, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue and disposal of the tissue immediately thereafter, washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, using of alcohol-based hand sanitizers with 60%-95% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available and routinely cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects to increase community resilience and readiness for responding to an outbreak; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDC currently recommends mitigation measures for communities experiencing an outbreak including staying at home when sick, keeping away from others who are sick, limiting face-to-face contact with others as much as possible, consulting with your healthcare provider if individuals or members of a household are at high risk for COVID-19 complications, wearing a facemask if advised to do so by a healthcare provider or by a public health official, staying home when a household member is sick with respiratory disease symptoms if instructed to do so by public health officials or a health care provider; and

**WHEREAS**, as Secretary of the Department of Children and Families (Department), I am responsible for meeting the dangers presented to this agency and the people we serve by this emergency.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHAD POPPELL**, as Secretary of the Department, by virtue of the authority vested in me by section 20.19, Florida Statutes, and Executive Orders 20-51 and 20-52 issued by Governor **RON DESANTIS**, and all other applicable laws, promulgate the following Emergency Order to take immediate effect:

Section 1. In exercising my authority as Secretary of the Department, and only to the extent necessary to respond to this emergency, I hereby:

A. Suspend sections 394.459(5)(c) and (d), and 916.107(5)(a)-(c), Florida Statutes, for the particular purpose of limiting individuals from visiting facilities to prevent exposure to COVID-19. For the purposes of this Emergency Order, a facility includes, designated receiving facilities, designated treatment facilities, addictions receiving facilities, and forensic facilities. Facilities shall continue to facilitate other communication methods, including written correspondence and telephone calls, and allow video conferencing when feasible. This suspension shall not apply to legal visits from licensed attorneys.

B. Suspend section 394.463(2)(g), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending the 12-hour time period an examination must be initiated for a minor child.

C. Suspend section 394.463(2)(i), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending the 12-hour required time frame a patient must be transferred from a hospital to a designated facility, in efforts to provide additional time for COVID-19 related medical clearances.

D. Suspend section 394.467(6)(b), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending the time limitations a person can be held on a court ordered involuntary inpatient placement within a treatment facility to allow for continuous treatment of civil patients in need of inpatient care in the event of court delays related to COVID-19.

E. Suspend section 394.913(3)(f), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending in-person interviews for individuals being evaluated by the multidisciplinary team for the purpose of recommending the person meets the definition of a sexually violent predator.

F. Suspend section 916.107(1)(a), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending the 15-day deadline for the transfer of forensic clients to a civil or forensic facility to assist with delays that may be associated with medical clearance.

G. Suspend section 916.107(3)(a)(1), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending the 48-hour time period physicians are permitted to provide emergency treatment to clients, without consent, to allow for continued treatment for conditions and/or symptoms related to COVID-19.

H. Suspend section 916.107(3)(a)(2), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending the 90-day expiration period for court orders authorizing the use of psychotropic medication, to allow for continuous treatment of forensic clients in the event of court delays related to COVID-19.

I. Suspend section 402.305(2)(e), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending certain licensing standards regarding training requirements for child care personnel.

J. Suspend section 409.175(14), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending certain licensing standards regarding training requirements for foster care.

K. Suspend sections 39.201, 39.2015, 39.301, 39.401, 39.402, 415.103, and 415.104, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of suspending required timeframes associated with commencing and completing child and adult protective investigations.

Section 2. The Department shall review its use of State buildings and facilities and may close such buildings and facilities in those portions of the State affected by this emergency, to the extent necessary to meet this emergency. Further, the Department shall report the closure of any State building or facility to the Department of Management Services.

Section 3. Further, I issue the following directives and authorizations:

A. The Department will develop policies, procedures, or other guidance to be utilized by its Child Protective Investigators and Adult Protective Investigators when making community contacts, aimed at protecting the health and safety of workers and the public from exposure to COVID-19.

B. The Department will develop policies and procedures, with guidance from the Florida Department of Management Services, to address employee leave, schedules, alternative work locations, and other employment matters in order to prevent exposure and mitigate effects of COVID-19.

Section 4. This Emergency Order and other final actions in response to this emergency shall be provided to the State Coordinating Officer contemporaneously or as soon as practicable.

Section 5. In accordance with Executive Order 20-52 issued by Governor **RON DESANTIS**, this Emergency Order shall expire upon the expiration of Executive Order 20-52, including any extensions thereto.

**DONE AND ORDERED** in Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida this 14th day of March, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CP', is written over a horizontal line.

Chad Poppell, Secretary