

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Scott A. Rivkees, MD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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**STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

**WHEREAS**, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a severe acute respiratory illness that appears to occur through respiratory transmission and presents with symptoms similar to those of influenza; and

**WHEREAS**, as of February 29, 2020, COVID-19 has spread throughout China and to 67 other countries and territories, including 62 cases within the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all states and territories implement aggressive measures to slow and contain transmission of COVID-19 in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency of international concern related to COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 31, 2020, the United States Department of Health and Human Services declared that a public health emergency exists nationwide as a result of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, one Hillsborough County resident and one Manatee County resident have tested presumptively positive for COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 1, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-51, declaring that appropriate measures to control the spread of COVID-19 in the State of Florida are necessary, and therefore directed that a Public Health Emergency be declared in the State of Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, implementation of basic precautions of infection control and prevention, including staying at home when ill and practicing respiratory and hand hygiene are necessary to slow or prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is a communicable disease with significant morbidity and mortality, and presents a severe danger to public health; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is a threat to public health in Florida.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Scott A. Rivkees, M.D., State Surgeon General and State Health Officer, by virtue of Executive Order Number 20-51 issued by Governor Ron DeSantis, the authority vested in me by section 381.00315, Florida Statutes, and after consultation with

Governor Ron DeSantis and public health officials within the Department of Health, do hereby declare that a public health emergency exists in the State of Florida. In order to respond to this emergency, the following shall commence:

**Section 1.** In order to protect public health, I find it is necessary for the Florida Department of Health to request assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to address this public health emergency.

**Section 2.** In order to protect public health, I find it is necessary to advise individuals in the State of Florida that have traveled to an area that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a Warning Level 3 or Alert Level 2 Travel Health Notice, or have been in close contact with an individual that has traveled to such an area, that develop symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing within 14 days of such travel or close contact should immediately contact the Florida Department of Health in their current county and self-isolate until cleared by the Florida Department of Health.

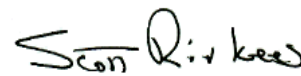
**Section 3.** In order to protect public health, I find it is necessary to advise any individuals who believe they may have been exposed to COVID-19 to contact their local county health department **prior to** travelling to any physician's office, emergency department, hospital, or urgent care center, to ensure proper protective measures are taken to prevent further risk of spread to others.

**Section 4.** In order to protect public health, I find it is necessary to remind health care providers, hospitals, and labs that they are required to immediately report all suspected cases of COVID-19 to the local county health department to ensure a prompt public health response to prevent disease among close contacts.

**Section 5.** In order to protect public health, the Florida Department of Health will maintain an Incident Management Team to coordinate the public health response for the State of Florida.

**Section 6.** In order to protect public health, the Florida Department of Health, at such time when necessary, may take actions to protect the public health, pursuant to the authority of section 381.00315, Florida Statutes, including quarantine, isolation and other interventions.

Issued this 1st day of March 2020, in Department of Health offices, Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida.



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Scott A. Rivkees, M.D.  
State Surgeon General