



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

June 28, 2022

The Honorable Denise Merrill
Secretary of the State
State Capitol, Hartford, CT 06106

Frederick J. Jortner
Clerk of the State House of Representatives
State Capitol, Hartford, CT 06106

Michael Jefferson
Clerk of the State Senate
State Capitol, Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Declaration of a Continued Public Health Emergency

Dear Secretary Merrill and Clerks of the General Assembly:

On March 10, 2020, pursuant to Sections 19a-131a and 28-9 of the Connecticut General Statutes, I declared both a public health emergency and a civil preparedness emergency throughout the State in response to the global pandemic of COVID-19. Since then, I have renewed such declarations and most recently the General Assembly passed a resolution continuing the public health and civil preparedness emergencies through June 30, 2022. Given the continued harmful impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure that the State can exercise all authorities to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Connecticut citizens, pursuant to Section 19a-131a of the Connecticut General Statutes, I declare that after June 30, 2022, a public health emergency continues to exist throughout all counties of the State of Connecticut.

A federal public health emergency (FPHE) was first declared by the Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary on January 27, 2020, and to date has been renewed eight times. A FPHE can be extended as many times as deemed necessary by the Secretary in 90-day increments or terminated early if deemed appropriate. Unless renewed, the current FPHE will expire on July 16, 2022. In a letter sent to Governors on January 22, 2021, the Acting HHS Secretary stated that "HHS would provide states with 60 days' notice prior to termination" of the FPHE.

Connecticut continues to make significant progress in the fight against COVID-19, and as of May 18, 2022, nearly 77% of Connecticut residents are considered fully vaccinated according to the Centers for Disease Control, including 97% of individuals aged 65 to 74 and 90.6% of individuals aged 75 or older. But despite these great strides, Connecticut continues to experience significant intermittent surges of COVID-19 infections and transmission as new variants of the virus emerge, including the BA.2 Omicron variant. And we cannot ignore that the negative public health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected low-income families and communities where receipt of benefits from and participation rates in public assistance programs administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) are high.

Food insecurity has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, with research from the Connecticut Foodshare Institute for Hunger & Research Solutions finding that 31% of Connecticut households were food insecure one year into the pandemic, including 44% of households with at least one child. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutritional assistance to approximately 219,700 Connecticut households.

Pursuant to Section 2302 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is authorized to make additional SNAP allotments to states for emergency SNAP benefits for eligible households contingent upon both a continuing public health emergency declaration by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act based on an outbreak of COVID-19, and an emergency or disaster declaration by a State based on an outbreak of COVID-19. Since these additional allotments were first provided by FNS, Connecticut has received and distributed an additional \$748 million of emergency SNAP benefits. The continued receipt of these funds is vital to offsetting the effects of food insecurity in Connecticut during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In consultation with the Commissioner of Public Health, I have determined that continuing to reduce density in congregate housing and providing alternate housing for people experiencing homelessness continues to be necessary to protect public health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Housing has found during the pandemic that non-congregate shelters have had far fewer outbreaks of COVID-19 than traditional shelters. Continuing non-congregate sheltering under this public health emergency will allow the State to protect the health and welfare of some of our most vulnerable residents. Over the course of the pandemic the State has placed 6,090 homeless individuals and many domestic violence survivors in non-congregate housing. Between just March and May 2022, 776 households comprised of 1,183 homeless individuals were placed in non-congregate housing. The State has received \$7.7 million in federal reimbursement and is expecting an additional \$20.2 million in pending reimbursements to support this important public health and safety program.

The Commissioner of Public Health, under her authority in section 19a-2a of the General Statutes to employ the most efficient and practical means for the prevention and suppression of disease, in coordination with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, and Commissioners of Emergency Services and Public Protection and Housing shall take all steps as they deem necessary, including issuing and continuing directives, guidance memoranda, or orders, both to arrange non-congregate housing with sufficient physical distancing capacity for people who, from the nature

of their existing housing, are at increased risk of exposure to, infection with, or transmission of COVID-19 and to apply for and receive federal assistance to cover the same.

I do not intend to issue any executive orders under this declaration. I intend to exercise under Section 19a-131a of Connecticut General Statutes my authority to apply for and receive federal assistance which will enable state agencies to continue accessing crucial federal funds under the Stafford Act and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. This declaration shall remain in effect through December 28, 2022, or until the FPHE ends, whichever is earlier.

I am filing this declaration with you under my hand and seal on this 28th day of June 2022.

Sincerely,



NED LAMONT,
Governor