

STATE OF ARKANSAS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

PROCLAMATION

EO 21-14

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

EXECUTIVE ORDER TO DECLARE A STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY FOR THE PURPOSE OF MEETING AND MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OF ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS: The Delta Variant of COVID-19 has infected thousands of Arkansans in recent months. Infections and hospitalizations continue to rise at an alarming rate, placing the accessibility to healthcare facilities for all Arkansans at risk; and

WHEREAS: A public health emergency was declared on March 11, 2020, to meet and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in Arkansas. The emergency was renewed several times until its final expiration on May 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS: At the expiration of the public health emergency on May 30, 2021, there were 1,938 active cases of COVID-19 in Arkansas and 194 hospitalizations in Arkansas due to COVID-19. On July 27, 2021, there were 15,491 active cases of COVID-19 in Arkansas and 1,025 hospitalizations in Arkansas due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS: In the two months since the expiration of the public health emergency, hospitalizations have climbed near the record of hospitalizations ever recorded in the state due to COVID-19. On January 13, 2021, hospitalizations reached 1,362. It is expected that hospitalizations will match or exceed that number in the coming weeks; and

WHEREAS: The rapid rise in cases and resulting hospitalizations is placing an unsustainable strain on Arkansas hospitals already struggling to staff their facilities; and

WHEREAS: Emergency action is warranted to utilize all available resources from the federal government and the Emergency Services Act of 1973 to provide hospitals with adequate staffing to meet the healthcare needs of all Arkansans during this surge in COVID-19 cases.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Asa Hutchinson, Governor of the State of Arkansas, acting under the authority vested in me by Ark. Code Ann. §§ 12-75-101, *et seq.* hereby declare a statewide state of disaster emergency related to public health, resulting from the catastrophic statewide impact of the Delta Variant of COVID-19 on the healthcare system of Arkansas. This emergency shall expire sixty (60) days from the signing of this order, unless the emergency is terminated at an earlier date, or it is approved for renewal by the Arkansas Legislative Council.

FURTHERMORE, I order the following:

- (1) The Arkansas Division of Emergency Management is hereby ordered to seek necessary staffing assistance for Arkansas healthcare facilities and hospitals through available avenues to include the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.
- (2) Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 12-75-114(e)(1), the Arkansas Department of Health is ordered to identify any regulatory statutes,

orders, or rules related to licensure of healthcare professionals that may be preventing, hindering, or delaying necessary action for coping with this emergency. Once identified, those statutes, orders, or rules, shall be reported to the Governor and posted on the Arkansas Department of Health website, and they shall be suspended for the duration of this emergency.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 29th day of July, in the year of our Lord 2021.



Asa Hutchinson, Governor



Attest:



John Thurston, Secretary of State