

Florida Declares State of Emergency Over Coronavirus Disease 2019

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On March 9, 2020, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis issued [Executive Order Number 20-52](#), declaring a state of emergency because of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The state of emergency covers all of Florida and gives broad powers to state and local government agencies in responding to COVID-19. It will expire on April 8, 2020, unless extended.

Previously, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) issued a [Declaration of Public Health Emergency](#) on March 1, 2020, stating that COVID-19 is a threat to public health in Florida. Pursuant to the Declaration of Public Health Emergency, the DOH requested assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and reminded Florida health care providers, hospitals, and laboratories to immediately report all suspected cases of COVID-19. As of March 9, 2020, Florida has approximately 20 reported cases of COVID-19, including two deaths, spread out in the following eight counties: Broward, Charlotte, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Volusia.

The March 9, 2020, executive order provides state and local government agencies broad powers to respond to COVID-19. First, it appoints the Florida Director of Emergency Management as the State Coordinating Officer during the state of emergency with the power to suspend any statute, order, or rule that would hinder any mitigation, response, or recovery effort. In addition, state and local government agencies may suspend budgetary and regulatory rules affecting leasing, printing, purchasing, travel, employment conditions, and employer compensation. Similarly, state and local government agencies may waive the formalities and procedures in entering contracts, employing temporary workers, renting equipment, and performing public works necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

The recently declared state of emergency further waives licensure requirements for out-of-state

health care professionals who render services in Florida related to COVID-19, as long as they do so for the American Red Cross or the DOH. Also, pharmacists may dispense up to a 30-day emergency prescription refill of maintenance medications.

Finally, the new executive order allows state and local agencies to close any public buildings. Information on any Florida public building closures, as well as all future COVID-19 notices, may be found at the dedicated [DOH COVID-19 website](#).

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