STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

NED LAMONT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 10C

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC – EXTENSION OF EXPANDED ACCESS TO TELEHEALTH SERVICES

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, I declared public health and civil preparedness emergencies throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, on September 1, 2020, I renewed the March 10, 2020 declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergencies and also issued new declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, which new and renewed emergencies remained in effect until February 9, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on January 26, 2021, I renewed the March 10, 2020 and September 1, 2020 declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies and also issued new declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, which new and renewed emergencies shall run concurrently and remain in effect until April 20, 2021, unless earlier terminated; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic remains a grave threat to public health and safety and civil preparedness in the State of Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, public health experts have determined that it is possible to transmit COVID-19 even before a person shows symptoms and through aerosol transmission; and transmission or "shedding" of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 may be most virulent before a person shows any symptoms; and

WHEREAS, the CDC has recommended that people with mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19 be assumed to be infected with the disease; and

WHEREAS, public health experts have recommended that, to prevent transmission of COVID19, and in light of the risk of asymptomatic transmission and a significant rate of false negative tests, everyone should assume they can be carrying COVID-19 even when they have received a negative test result or do not have symptoms; and

WHEREAS, to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend implementation of community mitigation strategies to slow transmission of COVID-19, including limitation on the size of gatherings, maintaining a safe distance from others, and wearing masks or face coverings; and

WHEREAS, because COVID-19 has caused unanticipated health effects that are not fully understood by the medical community, residents, businesses, and government, agencies face new and unanticipated economic, fiscal, and operational challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, infections with highly transmissible variants of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 have spread widely in the United Kingdom and elsewhere and have been discovered in Connecticut and other states, increasing the risk of greater transmission of COVID-19 throughout Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, healthcare providers providing services to patients, including those with Medicaid coverage, need to provide healthcare services during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic through the increased use of certain modes of telehealth service, which provide greater flexibility in testing, diagnosis and treatment while at the same time supporting adequate social distancing measures; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that certain provisions of Section 19a-206 of the Connecticut General Statutes limited access to telehealth services when such services offered one of the only safe ways to access medical care, and therefore such provisions interfered with the state's ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, on March 19, 2020, I issued Executive Order 7G, Section 5, which increased the availability of telehealth services by modifying and suspending several provisions of section 19a-906 of the Connecticut General Statutes; and

WHEREAS, I have issued other executive orders pursuant to my declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies that expanded the availability of certain services via telehealth; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Public Act 20-2 of the July 2020 Special Session of the General Assembly, effective July 31, 2020 ("PA 20-2"), the Connecticut General Assembly provided additional flexibility for the delivery of telehealth services and insurance coverage of these services, until March 15, 2021; and

WHEREAS, healthcare providers continue to provide, and patients continue to receive, beneficial care in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the effective utilization of expanded telehealth methods as provided pursuant to both executive orders and PA 20-2; and

WHEREAS, the Departments of Social Services and Public Health have indicated and legislative leadership agrees that the expansions of telehealth services provided by PA 20-2 remain critical to the public health and safety, and that the expiration of such expanded access would interfere with the ability of the state and its citizens and medical providers to respond adequately to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, while the leadership of the General Assembly is pursuing legislative action to address the ongoing need for such expanded access to telehealth services, such action will not be complete before certain provisions of PA 20-2 end on March 15, 2021;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, NED LAMONT, Governor of the State of Connecticut, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Connecticut, and pursuant to the public health and civil preparedness emergencies declared on March 10, 2020 and renewed on September 1, 2020 and January 26, 2021 and the new public health and civil preparedness emergencies declared on January 26, 2021, do hereby **ORDER AND DIRECT:**

> **Extension of Legislative Action to Expand Access to Telehealth Services.** The provisions of Public Act 20-2 of the July 2020 Special Session of the General Assembly that are designated to end on March 15, 2021 are hereby extended and shall remain in effect until April 20, 2021, unless earlier modified or terminated by me or superseded by law. Nothing herein shall be construed to repeal Executive Order No. 7F, Section 3, Executive Order No. 7G, Section 5, Executive Order No. 7L, Section 4, Executive Order No. 7DD, Sections 1 and 2, or Executive Order No. 7FF, Section 1, or any agency order issued pursuant thereto, provided that where any provision of an executive order or agency order conflicts with a provision of Public Act 20-2 of the July 2020 Special Session, the provision of Public Act 20-2, as extended by this order, shall govern.

Unless otherwise provided herein, this order shall take effect immediately and remain in effect for the duration of the public health and civil preparedness emergencies declared on March 10, 2020, September 1, 2020, and January 26, 2021.

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut, this 14th day of March, 2021.

Ned Lamont
Governor

By His Excellency's Command

Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State