ORDER OF THE STATE HEALTH OFFICER
REGARDING NON-CONGREGATE SHELTERING

WHEREAS Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been detected in Alabama; and

WHEREAS the appearance of COVID-19 in the State poses the potential of widespread exposure to an infectious agent that poses significant risk of substantial harm to a large number of people; and

WHEREAS the State Board of Health has designated COVID-19 to be a disease of epidemic potential, a threat to the health and welfare of the public, or otherwise of public health importance; and

WHEREAS on March 13, 2020, on recommendation of the State Health Officer, Kay Ivey, Governor of the State of Alabama, declared a state public health emergency exists in the State of Alabama; and

WHEREAS on March 16, 2020, the Jefferson County Health Officer, in response to a rapidly growing number of cases of COVID-19 being detected in Jefferson County, issued an order suspending certain public gatherings in that county; and

WHEREAS on March 17, 2020, the State Health Officer issued a similar order for counties surrounding Jefferson, including Blount, St. Clair, Shelby, Tuscaloosa, and Walker Counties, and

WHEREAS on March 19, 2020, the State Health Officer issued an order, and on March 20, 2020, and March 27, 2020, amended orders, of statewide application suspending certain public gatherings; and

WHEREAS on April 3, 2020, the State Health Officer issued a stay-at-home order due to risk of infection by COVID-19; and

WHEREAS providing non-congregate sheltering is an effective mitigation strategy for individuals with increased risk whose living situations prevent or inhibit adherence to social distancing and isolation guidelines.

NOW THEREFORE, THESE PREMISES CONSIDERED, it is ordered that the following be implemented statewide:

1. A state or local government entity or a private nonprofit organization that offers a temporary shelter related to the COVID-19 outbreak and that independently identifies a need and ability to offer non-congregate sheltering shall provide the temporary shelter and necessary wrap-around services using non-congregate solutions.

2. Individuals eligible for non-congregate sheltering are those with increased risk whose living situations prevent or inhibit adherence to social distancing guidelines. An individual with increased risk includes:

    a. An individual who does not require care in an inpatient facility and who has tested positive for COVID-19, has been exposed to COVID-19, or is symptomatic, awaiting test results or determined to not need a test;

b. An individual who is asymptomatic, but at "high risk," such as people over 65 or who have certain underlying health conditions (including respiratory, compromised immunities, or chronic disease), or are otherwise at risk in their current living situations (for example, domestic violence and sexual assault survivors).

c. A first responder or health care worker who is at reasonable risk of having been exposed to or infected with COVID-19, or is recovering from COVID-19, and cannot return to his or her usual living situation because of the risk of infecting other individuals.

d. A first responder or health care worker who resides with a "high risk" individual such as a person over 65 or who has certain underlying health conditions (including respiratory, compromised immunities, or chronic disease).

e. A first responder or health care worker whose work duties create an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 and who is temporarily unable to return to his or her usual residence due to increased working hours.

3. Non-congregate solutions include hotels, motels, dormitories, and other forms of non-congregate shelters and shall comply with the rules, orders, and guidance of the State Health Officer and Alabama Department of Public Health.

4. Nothing in this order is intended to prevent a state or local government entity or a private nonprofit organization from limiting the non-congregate sheltering to certain categories of individuals with increased risk, from establishing additional eligibility criteria (for example, limiting the sheltering to employees or clients of the entity or organization), or from providing non-congregate sheltering to individuals not listed in this order.

5. This order does not apply to alternate care sites for medical care.

6. This order shall take effect as of March 13, 2020, and shall continue in full force and effect throughout the duration of Alabama's public health emergency.

Done on this the 16 day of April, 2020.

Scott Harris. M.D., M.P.H.
State Health Officer