Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

# Executive Order

**NUMBER FIFTY-TWO (2020)**

**INCREASES IN HOSPITAL BED CAPACITY**
**IN RESPONSE TO NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

## Importance of the Issue

The Commonwealth of Virginia anticipates a sudden, yet temporary need to increase bed capacity in general hospitals and nursing homes within the Commonwealth. The increase may be needed to serve persons who become acutely ill due to the outbreak of a respiratory illness referred to as the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Based on information from the Virginia Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of cases of COVID-19 continues to increase within the Commonwealth and in neighboring states. It is anticipated that the number of persons who will need to be admitted to a hospital or nursing home for care within our communities may exceed the current capacity of our hospitals and nursing homes. Certain requirements in the *Code of Virginia* limit the ability of our hospitals and nursing homes to increase quickly their bed capacity in response to this expected higher demand.

## Directive

Therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of Virginia, by §§ 2.2-103 and 44-146.13 *et seq*. of the *Code*, and notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1.1 of Chapter 4 of Title 32.1 of the *Code*, I direct the State Health Commissioner, at his discretion, to authorize any general hospital or nursing home to increase licensed bed capacity as determined necessary by the Commissioner to respond to increased demand for beds resulting from COVID-19. Notwithstanding Virginia Code § 32.1-132, I further direct any beds added by a general hospital or nursing home pursuant to an authorization of the Commissioner under this Order will constitute licensed beds that do not require further approval or the issuance of a new license.

These actions are in concert with, and further the provisions of, Executive Order 51 in marshalling all resources and appropriate preparedness, response, and recovery measures to respond to the emergency. Any authorization by the Commissioner to increase bed capacity, and

the authority for any resulting increased number of beds, will expire 30 days after the expiration or rescission of Executive Order 51, as it may be amended.

**Effective Date of this Executive Order**

This Executive Order shall be effective March 20, 2020, and shall remain in full force and in effect until July 10, 2020, unless sooner amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 20th day of March, 2020.

Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:

Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth