Guidelines being developed to ensure child care for essential workers through COVID-19 crisis

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BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota has launched a rapid planning process to develop operating guidelines to ensure that child care is available for health care and other essential workers through the COVID-19 crisis, Gov. Doug Burgum said today. The planning process began over the weekend and is focused on three objectives, he said.

“We want to 1) protect the health of children, families and child care workers, 2) provide child care for essential worker households and 3) sustain the child care sector as an industry that’s essential to every business in North Dakota’s economy,” Burgum said. “We will need a fully functioning child care system when this pandemic is over and our economy gets back on track.”

The North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) and Governor’s Office will work with stakeholders over the next few days to finalize the guidelines, which will modify operating practices, prioritize essential workers and create financial support mechanisms. The final guidelines will be announced no later than 4 p.m. Thursday, March 26, with the intent they be implemented by Monday, March 30.

Questions about the process and guidelines may be directed to Jessica Thomasson, DHS director of community inclusion, at jthomasson@nd.gov (mailto:jthomasson@nd.gov).

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) today confirmed two additional cases of COVID-19 – a woman in her 30s in Burleigh County and a man in his 70s in Walsh County – bringing the state’s official total to 32 positive cases. The woman had been in close contact with a known positive

case, and the man's case was still under investigation. Burgum said a third positive result today in North Dakota was reported by a Fargo-area health care provider that had sent roughly 300 samples to a national lab; that positive result was not yet reflected in the NDDoH figures.

The state has tested 1,440 individuals from 48 of North Dakota's 53 counties. Four individuals are hospitalized.

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