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CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

ORDER EXTENDING THE TEMPORARY CLOSING OF ALL NON-EMERGENCY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

COVID-19 Order 15

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, I, Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting pursuant to the powers provided by Chapter 639 of the Acts of 1950 and Section 2A of Chapter 17 of the General Laws, declared that there now exists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts a state of emergency due to the outbreak of the 2019 novel Coronavirus ("COVID-19");

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization;

WHEREAS, in response to the pandemic, on March 18, 2020, I issued an Order requiring all child care programs in the Commonwealth to suspend normal operations by the end of the day on March 22, 2020 and not to re-open before Monday, April 6, 2020, and further authorizing the Department of Early Education and Care to establish emergency child care programs;

WHEREAS, the number of presumptive positive and confirmed cases of COVID-19 continues to rise exponentially in the Commonwealth. As of March 24, 2020, 1,159 cases of COVID-19 were reported by the Department of Public Health, including 11 deaths; and

WHEREAS, sections 7, 8, and 8A of Chapter 639 of the Acts of 1950 authorize the Governor, during the effective period of a declared emergency, to exercise any and all authority over persons and property necessary or expedient for meeting a state of emergency, including but not limited to authority over public assemblages in order to protect the health and safety of persons, over educational facilities that are supported in whole or in part by public funds, so as to extend those facilities' benefits and availability, and over variances of the terms and conditions of licenses issued by the Commonwealth or any of its agencies;

NOW, THEREFORE, I hereby order the following:

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All licensed, approved, or exempt child care programs in the Commonwealth shall not re-open for normal operations before Monday, May 4, 2020, unless authorized by the Department of Early Education and Care to continue operations as emergency programs. This directive supersedes the provision of the March 18, 2020 Order establishing an earlier date for re-opening.

The Department of Public Health and the Department of Early Education and Care, along with any board of health or authorized agent pursuant to G. L. c. 111, § 30, shall enforce this Order. In addition, I hereby direct the Commissioner of Public Health to act under the authority of G. L. c. 17, § 2A to supplement the terms of this Order in the event she determines additional measures are required to ensure that the terms of this Order are observed. Violation of the terms of this Order may result in penalties pursuant to Section 8 of Chapter 639 of the Acts of 1950.

This Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until May 4, 2020 unless further extended.

Given in Boston at 3:13PM this 25th day of March, two thousand and twenty

Charles D Baker

CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR
Commonwealth of Massachusetts