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GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL MEDICAL SURGE LOCATIONS

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Montpelier, VT – Governor Phil Scott today announced new steps in the State's plan to prepare for a surge in COVID-19 cases, and in turn, the need for additional hospital and medical capacity.

"We continue to expand our medical surge capacity to be prepared for what could be a significant increase in medical need in our state in the coming weeks," said Governor Scott. "I want to thank everyone for stepping up in this extraordinary time of service. While we hope we will not need this extra capacity, our modeling indicates we must be prepared for a significant surge in medical care to treat COVID-19 patients. We are taking these steps to ensure we are as prepared as possible for what could come."

Medical Surge Capacity Expanded Statewide

Governor Scott said the State has coordinated with communities and hospitals statewide, and with Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire, to increase capacity in the event of a surge of COVID-19 patients who require medical care.

In partnership with the Vermont National Guard (VTNG), the State is creating two additional high capacity care sites for surge: one in Essex Junction at the Champlain Valley Exposition (CVE), which will provide 400 beds staffed primarily by VTNG personnel; and another in Rutland County, supported by the Rutland Regional Medical Center, which will provide 150 beds. These high-capacity surge sites are in addition to regionally deployed sites at the Collins Perley Sports and Fitness Center in St. Albans, Barre Civic Center in Barre, and at the University of Vermont, which will create available bed space as this response unfolds. **These sites will be operated in close coordination with health care providers and will only be used if hospitals exceed their capacity.**

Additional rapid reaction medical surge trailers containing material for 50 additional beds have been prepositioned across Vermont, including at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Brattleboro, and Mt.

Ascutney Hospital and Health Center in Windsor. More assets, including two state portable hospitals, will be staged. These assets can be deployed quickly if needed.

In addition to the Vermont National Guard and health care leaders, the State is working to increase capacity through partnerships with home health providers, designated agencies, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and more.

"At the Governor's direction, the Vermont National Guard has already started executing on this plan," said Brigadier General Gregory Knight, adjutant general of the Vermont National Guard. "This is what we train to do in service to our state and nation. Our soldiers and airmen are ready and prepared to standup and staff the surge site at the Champlain Valley Exposition and provide support for the additional surge sites across the state. We will not rest until we have defeated this virus and our state is safe again."

"Rutland is proud to support these efforts to address increased medical need due to COVID-19," said Claudio Fort, president and chief executive officer of Rutland Regional Medical Center. "Our teams are working closely with all of our health care partners to protect our staff and keep our communities safe."

"This is a multi-dimensional response from many organizations and agencies in state government and throughout our communities," Governor Scott continued. "I am very proud of what everyone is doing to step up and come together. The social distancing measures we're implementing are so important to ensure we don't overwhelm our health care system, but we must also be prepared for any outcome, and that's what this surge plan is about. We will get through this and we'll do so together."

Medical Reserve Corp Volunteers Needed to Bolster Existing Health Care Workers

Those with medical experience, or other health care background, and the ability to volunteer are needed to bolster the ranks of Vermont's current health care workforce.

The State's volunteer website (https://www.vermont.gov/volunteer) directs these individuals to Vermont's MRC units, community-based groups of volunteers who can supplement local emergency, health care provider staff and public health resources. This is needed because Vermont's existing health care workers are going above and beyond to respond to this challenge as it unfolds, and they are going to need reinforcements.

The Vermont Medical Reserve Corps is seeking these qualified and experienced volunteers:

- Licensed and certified health care professionals;
- People with mental health, or other types of clinical or professional experience;
- Health care administrative experience, such as with medical data entry or language translators;

- People who have worked with displaced individuals, such as homeless shelter programs.

State officials emphasize that this effort is about drawing more skilled personnel, such as retirees or those not employed in the health care field, into the response and not about redirecting existing health care workers.

Vermont has eased licensing requirements for purposes of aiding this emergency response. Individuals who are licensed in other states or who were previously licensed should visit the Health Department website and review the guide on emergency licensure (https://www.healthvermont.gov/health-professionals-systems/board-medical-practice/COVID19).

Other Volunteer Workers and Donations Also Needed to Strengthen Vermont's Response

Other individuals who do not have medical or health care backgrounds but are willing to volunteer their time in Vermont's response effort can register through the State's volunteer web portal and indicate their expertise and availability.

The State expects to draw upon many skills in meeting the challenge of serving those affected by COVID-19, including potentially drivers, food service, construction, IT, security, skilled trades and more. In addition to volunteering their time, Vermonters can also contribute to blood banks, food banks and other emergency supply efforts. The American Red Cross of Northern New England faces a severe blood shortage and any local food banks and other community organizations need support and donations of supplies.

In addition to volunteering, Vermonters can also give back in the following ways:

- Donate PPE: Donations of N95 masks, medical and industrial grade or surgical masks can be brought to your nearest State Police Barracks. You can find the location nearest to you here: https://vsp.vermont.gov/stations (https://vsp.vermont.gov/stations).
- Give blood: Visit the American Red Cross to learn how to safely donate blood: https://www.redcross.org/local/new-hampshire-vermont.html (https://www.redcross.org/local/new-hampshire-vermont.html).
- Support your local food bank. Donate online at vtfoodbank.org or you can text GIVEHEALTH to 85511. If you're in need of help, please visit vtfoodbank.org/gethelp.

Governor Scott is calling on all Vermonters to support these critical needs.

"Our state is at its best when Vermonters pull together to help each other. The coming weeks will be very difficult, but united in common purpose, we will face, fight and defeat this virus – and emerge

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