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State of Rhode Island

Daniel J. McKee  
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

21-86

August 19, 2021

**DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY FOR NEW COVID-19 VARIANTS**

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Rhode Island declared a state of emergency due to the dangers to health posed by the original strain of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that is responsible for COVID-19;

WHEREAS, at the time of that declared state of emergency, the original SARS-CoV-2 strain had a rate of spread of 2-3, meaning that one person would likely spread the virus to 2-3 others;

WHEREAS, the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2 (“Delta Variant”) is now sweeping the country and has become the dominant strain in Rhode Island and nationally;

WHEREAS, the Delta Variant may have a viral load 1,000 times greater than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2 that hit Rhode Island in 2020:

WHEREAS, the Delta Variant is more than twice as contagious as recent variants, and 3-4 times more contagious than the original strain, leading to a significant increase in

transmission among those who are not vaccinated and breakthrough infection in some people who are fully vaccinated;

**WHEREAS**, both unvaccinated and vaccinated people can spread the Delta Variant;

**WHEREAS**, since August 11, 2021, Rhode Island has been experiencing a high level of community transmission of the Delta Variant, defined as more than 100 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people in the past 7 days;

**WHEREAS**, on July 4, 2021, Rhode Island had only 11.2 new cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people in the prior 7 days; by August 16, it had 195.6 new cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 persons;

**WHEREAS**, as of July 4, 2021, there were 22 hospitalized COVID-19 patients in the hospital, while on August 16, there were 103 hospitalized COVID-19 patients;

**WHEREAS**, on June 6, 2021, Rhode Island reported only 2 cases of COVID-19 in long term care facilities, while on August 16, 2021 there were 34 cases of COVID-19 in long term care facilities;

**WHEREAS**, though it is summer – a traditionally slower time for hospital admission –Emergency Department admissions in all hospitals in Rhode Island are exceeding capacity and hospitals are on rolling diversion of patients due to increased patient volumes;

**WHEREAS**, there has been a consistent increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths since July 4, 2021 and RIDOH modeling data project, by the first few weeks of September, that the number of people in Rhode Island hospitals may exceed hospital capacity;

**WHEREAS**, an alternative hospital site in Cranston will be reopened as soon as possible to deal with a possible surge caused by the Delta Variant;

**WHEREAS**, since vaccines are only authorized for people 12 and older, people less than 12 years old are particularly susceptible to infection from the Delta Variant, which is more likely to affect children than the original strain;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island is seeing increasing cases of COVID-19 in children and expects to see more childhood cases increase;

WHEREAS, RIDOH's modeling team of statisticians and public health professionals reports that, based on its statistical analysis, without continued and improved mitigation measures, the Delta Variant may cause an increase in the rate of deaths by the end of September 2021;

WHEREAS, this increase in prevalence of the Delta Variant poses a significant and imminent risk to Rhode Islanders of increased symptomatic disease, hospitalization, and death; and

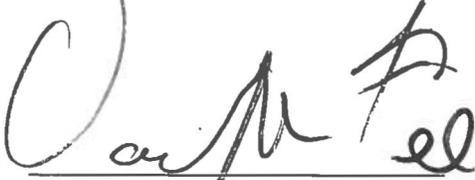
WHEREAS, a serious threat to public health exists because of the Delta Variant and the State needs to take additional measures to limit the spread of the Delta Variant and other new variants of concern.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DANIEL J. MCKEE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island, pursuant to Article IX of the Rhode Island Constitution and the Rhode Island General Laws, including, but not limited to, Title 30, Chapter 15, and Title 23, Chapter 8 do hereby proclaim, order and direct the following:

1. A new state of emergency is declared for the State of Rhode Island due to the dangers to health and life posed by the Delta Variant and other emerging variants and the state disaster emergency plan is activated to deal with this specific threat.
2. Pursuant to the powers granted by the Rhode Island Constitution and its General Laws, and any other applicable provisions of state or federal law, I shall from time to time issue additional recommendations, directions and orders as circumstances require, either written or verbal.

This Order shall take effect immediately and remain in full force and effect through September 18, 2021, unless renewed, modified or terminated by subsequent Executive Order.

So Ordered:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan McKee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "M".

Daniel J. McKee  
Governor