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2022 Florida Statutes

Title XXIX - Public Health

Chapter 381 - Public Health: General Provisions

381.00315 - Public Health Advisories; Public Health Emergencies; Isolation and Quarantines.

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381.00315 Public health advisories; public health emergencies; isolation and quarantines. —The State Health Officer is responsible for declaring public health emergencies, issuing public health advisories, and ordering isolation or quarantines.

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Isolation” means the separation of an individual who is reasonably believed to be infected with a communicable disease from individuals who are not infected, to prevent the possible spread of the disease.

(b) “Public health advisory” means any warning or report giving information to the public about a potential public health threat. Before issuing any public health advisory, the State Health Officer must consult with any state or local agency regarding areas of responsibility which may be affected by such advisory. Upon determining that issuing a public health advisory is necessary to protect the public health and safety, and prior to issuing the advisory, the State Health Officer must notify each county health department

within the area which is affected by the advisory of the State Health Officer's intent to issue the advisory. The State Health Officer is authorized to take any action appropriate to enforce any public health advisory.

(c) "Public health emergency" means any occurrence, or threat thereof, whether natural or manmade, which results or may result in substantial injury or harm to the public health from infectious disease, chemical agents, nuclear agents, biological toxins, or situations involving mass casualties or natural disasters.

(d) "Quarantine" means the separation of an individual reasonably believed to have been exposed to a communicable disease, but who is not yet ill, from individuals who have not been so exposed, to prevent the possible spread of the disease.

(2)(a) The department shall prepare and maintain a state public health emergency management plan to serve as a comprehensive guide to public health emergency response in this state. The department shall develop the plan in collaboration with the Division of Emergency Management, other executive agencies with functions relevant to public health emergencies, district medical examiners, and national and state public health experts and ensure that it integrates and coordinates with the public health emergency management plans and programs of the Federal Government. The plan must address each element of public health emergency planning and incorporate public health and epidemiological best practices to ensure that the state is prepared for every foreseeable public health emergency. The plan must include an assessment of state and local public health infrastructure, including information systems, physical plant, commodities, and human resources, and an analysis of the infrastructure necessary to achieve the level of readiness proposed by the plan for short-term and long-term public emergencies. Beginning July 1, 2022, the department shall submit the plan to the Division of Emergency Management for inclusion in the state comprehensive emergency management plan pursuant to s. 252.35. The department shall review the plan after the declared end of each public health emergency, and, in any event, at least every 5 years, and update its terms as necessary to ensure continuous planning.

(b) Before declaring a public health emergency, the State Health Officer shall, to the extent possible, consult with the Governor and shall notify the Chief of Domestic Security. The declaration of a public health emergency shall continue until the State Health Officer finds that the threat or danger has been dealt with to the extent that the emergency conditions no longer exist and he or she terminates the declaration. However, a declaration of a public health emergency may not continue for longer than 60 days unless the Governor concurs in the renewal of the declaration.

(c) The State Health Officer, upon declaration of a public health emergency, shall establish by order the method and procedure for identifying and reporting cases and deaths involving the infectious disease or other occurrence identified as the basis for the declared public health emergency. The method and procedure must be consistent with any standards developed by the Federal Government specific to the declared emergency or, if federal standards do not exist, must be consistent with public health best practices as identified by the State Health Officer. During the pendency of a public health emergency, the department is the sole entity responsible for the collection and official reporting and publication of cases and deaths. The State Health Officer, by order or emergency rule, may ensure necessary assistance from licensed health care providers in carrying out this function and may request the assistance of district medical examiners in performing this function.

(d) The State Health Officer, upon declaration of a public health emergency, may take actions that are necessary to protect the public health. Such actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Directing manufacturers of prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs who are permitted under chapter 499 and wholesalers of prescription drugs located in this state who are permitted under chapter 499 to give priority to the shipping of specified drugs to pharmacies and health care providers within geographic areas identified by the State Health Officer. The State Health Officer must identify the drugs to be shipped. Manufacturers and wholesalers located in the state must respond to the State Health Officer's priority shipping directive before shipping the specified drugs.
2. Notwithstanding chapters 465 and 499 and rules adopted thereunder, directing pharmacists employed by the department to compound bulk prescription drugs and provide these bulk prescription drugs to physicians and nurses of county health departments or any qualified person authorized by the State Health Officer for administration to persons as part of a prophylactic or treatment regimen.
3. Notwithstanding s. 456.036, temporarily reactivating the inactive license of the following health care practitioners, when such practitioners are needed to respond to the public health emergency: physicians licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459; physician assistants licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459; licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and advanced practice registered nurses licensed under part I of chapter 464; respiratory therapists licensed under part V of chapter 468; and emergency medical technicians and paramedics certified under part III of chapter 401. Only those health care practitioners specified in this paragraph who possess an

unencumbered inactive license and who request that such license be reactivated are eligible for reactivation. An inactive license that is reactivated under this paragraph shall return to inactive status when the public health emergency ends or before the end of the public health emergency if the State Health Officer determines that the health care practitioner is no longer needed to provide services during the public health emergency. Such licenses may only be reactivated for a period not to exceed 90 days without meeting the requirements of s. 456.036 or chapter 401, as applicable.

4. Ordering an individual to be examined, tested, treated, isolated, or quarantined for communicable diseases that have significant morbidity or mortality and present a severe danger to public health. Individuals who are unable or unwilling to be examined, tested, or treated for reasons of health, religion, or conscience may be subjected to isolation or quarantine.

a. Examination, testing, or treatment may be performed by any qualified person authorized by the State Health Officer.

b. If the individual poses a danger to the public health, the State Health Officer may subject the individual to isolation or quarantine. If there is no practical method to isolate or quarantine the individual, the State Health Officer may use any means necessary to treat the individual.

c. Any order of the State Health Officer given to effectuate this paragraph is immediately enforceable by a law enforcement officer under s. 381.0012.

(e) Individuals who assist the State Health Officer at his or her request on a volunteer basis during a public health emergency are entitled to the benefits specified in s. 110.504(2), (3), (4), and (5).

(3) To facilitate effective emergency management, when the United States Department of Health and Human Services contracts for the manufacture and delivery of licensable products in response to a public health emergency and the terms of those contracts are made available to the states, the department shall accept funds provided by counties, municipalities, and other entities designated in the state emergency management plan required under s. 252.35(2)(a) for the purpose of participation in those contracts. The department shall deposit those funds in the Grants and Donations Trust Fund and expend those funds on behalf of the donor county, municipality, or other entity for the purchase of the licensable products made available under the contract.

(4) The department has the duty and the authority to declare, enforce, modify, and abolish the isolation and quarantine of persons, animals, and premises as the circumstances indicate for controlling communicable diseases or providing protection from unsafe conditions that pose a threat to public health, except as provided in ss. 384.28 and 392.545-392.60. Any order of the department issued pursuant to this subsection shall be immediately enforceable by a law enforcement officer under s. 381.0012.

(5) The department shall adopt rules to specify the conditions and procedures for imposing and releasing an isolation or a quarantine. The rules must include provisions related to:

(a) The closure of premises.

(b) The movement of persons or animals exposed to or infected with a communicable disease.

(c) The tests or treatment for communicable disease required before employment or admission to the premises or to comply with an isolation or a quarantine.

(d) Testing or destruction of animals with or suspected of having a disease transmissible to humans.

(e) Access by the department to isolated or quarantined premises.

(f) The disinfection of isolated or quarantined animals, persons, or premises.

(g) Methods of isolation or quarantine.

(6) The rules adopted under this section and actions taken by the department pursuant to a declared public health emergency, isolation, or quarantine shall supersede all rules enacted by other state departments, boards or commissions, and ordinances and regulations enacted by political subdivisions of the state. Any person who violates any rule adopted under this section, any isolation or quarantine, or any requirement adopted by the department pursuant to a declared public health emergency, commits a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

History.—s. 16, ch. 96-403; s. 63, ch. 97-100; s. 2, ch. 2002-269; s. 6, ch. 2005-165; s. 35, ch. 2010-161; s. 16, ch. 2012-184; s. 2, ch. 2015-120; s. 15, ch. 2018-106; s. 17, ch. 2021-8; s. 1, ch. 2021-275.

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