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State of Rhode Island

Daniel J. McKee
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

22-08

January 27, 2022

ADJUSTING WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTERED NURSE GRADUATES

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Executive Order 20-02 was issued for a declaration of a state of emergency due to the dangers to health and life posed by SARS-CoV-2 (“COVID-19”) and that Order has been extended through at least February 17, 2022;

WHEREAS, on November 12, 2021, I issued Executive Order 21-109 affirming the disaster emergency that was first declared on August 19, 2021 for the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 (“the Delta variant”) and other then-existing COVID-19 variants and that Order has been extended through at least February 4, 2022;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island hospitals and other healthcare facilities are experiencing a shortage of medical staff and increased difficulty recruiting new staff due to a nationwide and statewide crisis of available health care workers who are needed to provide care for existing and new COVID-19 variant cases, as well as for patients seeking routine inpatient and outpatient care;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island hospitals are experiencing reduced inpatient capacity for admissions due to (i) the closure of inpatient hospital beds and units, caused by health care provider staffing shortages, and (ii) increased lengths of stay of existing patients, resulting

from lack of availability of beds in sub-acute facilities and/or home-based medical support services;

WHEREAS, nursing home and rehabilitation staffing shortages and COVID-19 outbreaks have impacted the ability for post-acute care providers to accept discharged patients from Rhode Island hospitals;

WHEREAS, registered nurses are an integral part of Rhode Island's health care system overall, and have played an exceedingly important role in providing quality, therapeutic and timely care to persons afflicted with COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic;

WHEREAS, registered nurse graduates, having completed the educational requirements for their profession, are required to pass the *National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses* to become licensed registered nurses;

WHEREAS, allowing registered nurse graduates to work in hospitals and other health care settings sooner under proper supervision would help to alleviate the current healthcare workforce shortage; and

WHEREAS, easing work requirements for registered nurse graduates pending licensure would enhance the State's ability to cope with pandemic by enabling an educated and talented cohort of healthcare professionals to support a strained system in a safe and effective manner.

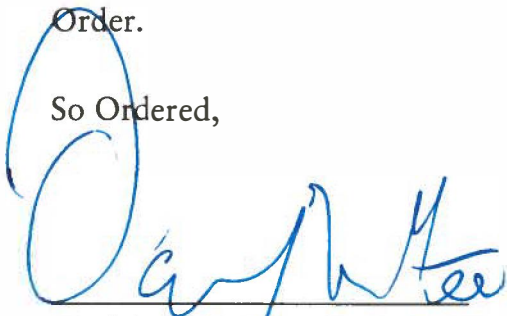
NOW, THEREFORE, I, DANIEL J. MCKEE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island, pursuant to Article IX of the Rhode Island Constitution and the Rhode Island General Laws including, but not limited to, Title 30, Chapter 15, do hereby order and direct the following:

1. The condition of the statutory exemption in Rhode Island General Laws § 5-34-31(2) that applies to the practice of nursing "pending the results of the licensing examinations following that graduation" is hereby suspended for registered nurse graduates, provided that the registered nurse graduates shall:
 - a. apply and receive temporary graduate nursing licenses that are valid for a period not exceeding 90 days;

- b. work under the supervision of licensed registered nurses; and
 - c. comply with other applicable requirements.
2. The Rhode Island Department of Health shall promulgate and enforce any rules and regulations necessary to implement this Order.

This Order shall take effect immediately and remain in full force and effect through February 14, 2022 unless renewed, modified, or terminated by a subsequent Executive Order.

So Ordered,



Daniel J. McKee
Governor