

## **Emergency Justification**

The 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a disease that causes mild to severe respiratory symptoms, including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. People infected with COVID-19 have had symptoms ranging from those that are mild (like a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires medical care in a general hospital and can be fatal, with a disproportionate risk of severe illness for older adults and/or those who have serious underlying medical health conditions.

On January 30, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) designated the COVID-19 outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. On a national level, the Secretary of Health and Human Services determined on January 31, 2020 that as a result of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States, a public health emergency existed and had existed since January 27, 2020, nationwide. Thereafter, the situation rapidly evolved throughout the world, with many countries, including the United States, quickly progressing from the identification of travel-associated cases to person-to-person transmission among close contacts of travel-associated cases, and finally to widespread community transmission of COVID-19. New York State first identified cases on March 1, 2020 and thereafter became the national epicenter of the outbreak. On March 7, 2020 with widespread transmission rapidly increasing within certain areas of the state, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued an Executive Order declaring a state disaster emergency to aid in addressing the threat COVID-19 poses to the health and welfare of New York State residents and visitors, which ended on June 24, 2021, due to the success in vaccination rates, and declining hospitalization and positivity statewide. With the emergence of the Delta variant accounting for 95% of recent sequenced positives in New York State, these regulations are necessary, on an emergency basis, to establish minimum standards to control the spread of COVID-19 at licensed, registered and enrolled legally-exempt group child care programs.