

March 20, 2020

State takes steps to reduce regulatory burdens to help North Dakotans through COVID-19 crisis

Actions include streamlining unemployment claims, recognizing driver's licenses and motor vehicle registration that expired March 1 or later

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Doug Burgum today signed three executive orders today to reduce regulatory burdens and improve services for North Dakota citizens to help them through the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

The North Dakota Department of Health today confirmed seven additional cases of COVID-19: two cases in Burleigh County, three cases in Morton County and one case each in Pierce County and Ramsey County. Two individuals are hospitalized. The state has tested 938 cases, including 26 positive cases.

“By cutting red tape and streamlining services, state government can better serve North Dakotans and provide relief during this stressful time,” Burgum said. “We continue to explore every available avenue to ensure that citizens can easily access the services and programs they need while prioritizing their health, safety and well-being.”

Among the actions taken today:

- One [executive order](#) issued today requires immediate changes to the unemployment insurance process – expanding eligibility, making it easier for workers to file claims and allowing payments to be issued more quickly. Burgum noted the state saw a sharp increase in unemployment claims this week, with 600 claims filed Wednesday and 1,600 claims filed Thursday, compared with 418 claims filed during all of last week. More information will be available on the Department of Commerce's new [webpage](#) for COVID-19 business and employer resources.
- Burgum also [ordered](#) state agencies to identify by 5 p.m. Tuesday any state laws, rules or regulations that hinder or delay their ability to render maximum assistance or continue to deliver essential services to citizens during the COVID-19 crisis. State elected officials and other executive branch offices were invited to do the same.

The same executive order requires law enforcement agencies and private sector businesses to recognize any North Dakota driver's license or motor vehicle registration that expired on or after March 1, 2020, as valid and current as long as the executive order is in effect.

- An executive order issued Thursday was [amended](#) today to allow for expanded telehealth services in North Dakota as residents practice social distancing and medical facilities try to limit in-person visits to slow the spread of COVID-19. Burgum thanked Insurance Commissioner Jon Godfread for his work to expand which telehealth services can be reimbursed.

The order also adds medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals to the list of health care and behavioral health workers who can work in North Dakota if they're appropriately licensed in another state, to ensure North Dakota has enough health care workers if the COVID-19 crisis escalates.

The order will remain in effect for the duration of the state of emergency declared by the governor on March 13 in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Burgum also highlighted that North Dakota has been approved for businesses to begin submitting applications for disaster assistance loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA). More information is available on the Commerce [website](#) or by going directly to the SBA website at disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/.