



The Governor's Office of  
**Faith-Based and  
Community Initiatives**

*Dave Worland, Executive Director*



Department of  
**Health**

*Dr. Lisa Piercey, Commissioner*



Department of  
**Human Services**

*Daniel Barnes, Commissioner*

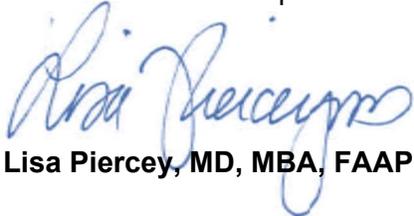
The Tennessee Department of Health, Department of Human Services and the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives are issuing this statement of support for non-congregant shelters to house individuals and families who may be at risk for COVID-19.

- **WHEREAS** Vulnerable populations who do not have permanent or temporary housing cannot safely comply with Safer at Home guidelines and may not have access to food, transportation, finances, familial, and other structural supports needed to maintain proper health during COVID-19;
- **WHEREAS** Individuals and families who are in congregant housing may include those in nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, homeless shelters, group homes, half-way houses, safe houses/domestic abuse shelters, and other types of temporary, semi-permanent, or permanent congregant housing;
- **WHEREAS** Medical personnel, mental health professionals, first responders, substance abuse professionals, and administrative and janitorial staff of congregant facilities may need to seek non-congregant housing in order to continue to provide oversight and services to the guests of congregant houses;
- **WHEREAS** Persons who are deemed to be most at-risk for the impacts of COVID-19 may include those who:
  - o Have underlying health conditions (such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, hypertension, compromised immune systems, and other respiratory or genetic conditions);
  - o Are of advanced age (50 years old and older);
  - o Have chronic malnutrition and other conditions related to long-term impacts of poverty or low socioeconomic status; or
  - o Are pregnant;
- **WHEREAS** In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, non-congregant housing is the optimal type of housing to allow individuals and families to stay at home. It is important to consider that families should not be separated unless there is medical cause. Children should not be separated from parents unless the parent(s) must be hospitalized;
- **WHEREAS** Non-congregant housing is critical to both prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and may be used to both quarantine congregant housing staff, volunteers, and guests in the event of suspected or confirmed exposure and/or in situations where ill persons have received positive diagnostic tests or are awaiting testing results and are symptomatic;

- **WHEREAS** Non-congregant housing is considered to be housing that can provide individuals or families with a dedicated sleeping/living space and access to a private bathroom. Facility types may include:
  - o Hotels/Motels/Inns
  - o Short-term rental facilities
  - o Dorm rooms
  - o Apartments
  - o Homes/Condominiums
  - o Tent encampments, cabins, and similar facilities that provide separation; and
  
- **WHEREAS** Tennessee has a responsibility and duty to protect the health and safety of all people and may enlist public/private partnerships in order to support this charge and provide an adequate supply of non-congregant housing across Tennessee to support current and future needs related to the impacts of COVID-19.

**THEREFORE**, pursuant to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Non-Congregate Sheltering FAQs dated March 31, 2020, the Tennessee Department of Health, Department of Human Services and the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives encourage congregate facilities across the state to transition to non-congregant models where feasible due to the impending continued spread of the COVID-19 virus. Ideally, organizations and institutions will not wait until a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 arises among staff, volunteers, or guests in order to justify moving operations to a non-congregate model. Congregate models should only be maintained if there is no other feasible alternative non-congregate model.

This resolution takes place effective immediately on April 8, 2020.



**Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP | Commissioner, TN Department of Health**



**Danielle Barnes | Commissioner, TN Department of Human Services**



**Dave Worland | Executive Director, Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**