



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

Andy Beshear
Governor

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Eric C. Friedlander
Acting Secretary

Steven J. Stack, MD
Commissioner

March 30, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

On March 6, 2020, the Commonwealth of Kentucky identified its first COVID-19 positive patient. On this same day, Governor Andy Beshear declared a state of emergency to mobilize all available resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and minimize the harm caused by it to Kentuckians. As COVID-19 spreads throughout our state, crisis standards of care will need to be deployed to save the largest number of lives possible. Utilize these guiding, ethical principles for decision-making:

- Duty to plan
- Duty to steward resources
- Respect for human dignity
- Communication
- Reciprocity
- Duty of care
- Consistency and fairness

When shifting from *conventional* standards of care to *contingency* standards of care and finally to *crisis* standards of care, be mindful of these triggers:

- Sustained community wide transmission
- Shortage of supply/medication
- Decrease in staffing levels
- Limited or unavailability of ICU beds
- Delays in access to care due to demand

When shifting to crisis standards of care, recognize the triggers and identify ways to modify current standards to meet the needs of surges and to conserve healthcare resources. Escalating care should be based on what resources are available and the quantity of resources required. Crisis options must be explored and implemented at all levels.

I look forward to and anticipate the day when we can return to business as usual, but in the interim, optimizing PPE, protecting staff and preventing transmission should be at the forefront of decision-making.

As Team Kentucky, we are here to support you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven J. Stack".

Steven J. Stack, MD
Commissioner