WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, the undersigned issued Executive Order No. 116 which declared a State of Emergency to coordinate the state’s response and protective actions to address the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency and to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors located in North Carolina (“Declaration of a State of Emergency”); and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia pursuant to Section 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121-5207 (the “Stafford Act”); and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States pursuant to Sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1601, et seq. and consistent with Section 1135 of the Social Security Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 1320b-5), declared that the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States constitutes a national emergency, retroactive to March 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the undersigned has issued Executive Order Nos. 117–122, 124–125, 129-131, 133-36 and 138-142 for the purposes of protecting the health, safety and welfare of the people of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2020, the President of the United States, pursuant to Section 401 of the Stafford Act, approved a Major Disaster Declaration, FEMA-4487-DR, for the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States of America has enacted The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which includes the appropriation of funds to the State of North Carolina to be used to cover costs that are necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency during the period March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020; and
WHEREAS, according to the “Corona virus Relief Fund Guidance for State, Territorial, Local, and Tribal Governments” issued by the U.S. Treasury on April 22, 2020 and related U.S. Treasury FAQs updated on May 4, 2020 (the “Guidance”), permissible uses of CARES Act funding include expenditures that are reasonably necessary for their intended use in the reasonable judgment of the government officials responsible for spending CARES Act payments and such government officials do not need to submit proposed expenditures to the U.S. Treasury for approval; and

WHEREAS, community health centers, free and charitable clinics, local health departments and rural health centers provide crucial health services to vulnerable populations in North Carolina. With communities of color being at higher risk of the impact of COVID-19, these organizations are essential to North Carolina’s fight against COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, these health care provided services and associated costs during this pandemic have been substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, in order to continue providing health services while also reducing exposure to COVID-19 with in-person visits, access to telehealth services is essential to North Carolina’s fight against COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the overall wellbeing and management of underlying health conditions is crucial for high risk communities; and

WHEREAS, according to the North Carolina Justice Center, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, North Carolina’s uninsured rate was approximately 13 percent and during the last two (2) weeks of March, over 105,000 North Carolinians lost their employer-sponsored health insurance due to job loss; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (“NCDHHS”) has confirmed the number of cases of COVID-19 in North Carolina continues to rise, in part due to community spread of the virus; and

WHEREAS, more than thirty-one thousand people in North Carolina have had laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19, and over nine hundred people in North Carolina have died from the disease; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina was one of the first states to compile and release demographic data including incidence of COVID-19 by race, ethnicity, age, and gender and NCDHHS publishes these COVID-19-related statistics; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the efforts mentioned above, as of June 1, 2020, African Americans make up 22 percent of North Carolina’s population, but account for 30 percent of confirmed COVID-19 cases and 34 percent of COVID-19 deaths in cases where race is known in the state; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the efforts mentioned above, Hispanics make up 39 percent of COVID-19 confirmed cases, in cases where ethnicity is known, while only accounting for about 10 percent of the population; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) acknowledges that social and economic differences often create health differences in communities of color, and that public health emergencies can isolate communities of colors from necessary resources; and

WHEREAS, Historically Underutilized Businesses account for 58 percent of North Carolina’s small business community; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Administration conducted a 2020 COVID-19 Business Survey of Historically Underutilized Businesses, which surveyed nearly 400 of these minority and women owned businesses, and 90 percent of the surveyed businesses reported that their business had been impacted by COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is exposing racial disparities that are entrenched in our health care and economic institutions for communities of color; and
WHEREAS, the undersigned has taken executive action to address the health and economic impact of COVID-19 on high-risk communities, including but not limited to, directing NCDHHS to work with health insurance plans to identify burdens for COVID-19 testing in order to reduce cost-sharing, ceasing disconnection of utilities and discouraging disconnection of telecommunication services, broadening unemployment insurance benefits, prohibiting residential and commercial evictions, vigorously encouraging social distancing, and providing for childcare for essential workers; and

WHEREAS, social determinants of health influence all aspects of human life and in order to improve health or eliminate health disparities, there must be a greater focus on all social determinants of health by the medical community in the state; and

WHEREAS, environmental justice refers to the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concludes that “many minority, low-income, tribal, and indigenous people in the United States have experienced higher levels of environmental pollution and other social and economic burdens” that “have led to poorer health outcomes, as well as fewer financial or advocacy opportunities;” and

WHEREAS, all North Carolinians have a right to clean air, clean water, clean soil, and a stable climate, and they deserve an opportunity to participate fully and meaningfully in decisions that affect their living environment; and

WHEREAS, further action is necessary to eliminate disparities and mitigate the impact of COVID-19, through delivery of COVID-19 related health services and economic stimulus opportunities for vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, Andrea Harris dedicated her life to eliminating disparities in North Carolina, fighting for social, economic and racial equity for all North Carolinians, and

WHEREAS, as a Bennett College graduate, she taught school for a brief period before starting her life’s work – community advocacy in her hometown in Vance County; and

WHEREAS, wanting to do more and make a greater impact, Andrea Harris co-founded the non-profit North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development to support minority and women owned businesses; and

WHEREAS, she finished her career as a Senior Fellow at Self-Help Credit Union, and also served in my administration on the Advisory Council for Historically Underutilized Businesses and on the Board of Trustees for Vance-Granville Community College; and

WHEREAS, Andrea Harris left an indelible impression and the State of North Carolina is forever grateful for her contributions which have helped to inspire these actions; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 116 invoked the Emergency Management Act, and authorizes the undersigned to exercise the powers and duties set forth therein to direct and aid in the response to, recovery from, and mitigation against emergencies; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-48(a), “[i]t is the policy of this State to encourage and promote the use of small contractors, minority contractors, physically handicapped contractors, and women contractors in State purchasing of goods and services”; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143-48.4 and 143-128.4, the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration shall have the authority to develop and administer a statewide uniform program for certification of a historically underutilized business and adopt rules and procedures regarding the same; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-52(a), competitive bids on contracts shall be received in accordance with rules and regulations to be adopted by the Secretary of the Department of Administration; and
WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.10(b)(2), the undersigned may make, amend, or rescind necessary orders, rules, and regulations within the limits of the authority conferred upon the Governor in the Emergency Management Act; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.10(b)(7), the officers and personnel of the departments, offices, and agencies of the state and its political subdivisions are required to cooperate with the undersigned and extend their services to the undersigned so that they can be utilized upon request; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.30(a)(1), the undersigned may utilize all available state resources as reasonably necessary to cope with an emergency, including the transfer and direction of personnel or functions of state agencies or units thereof for the purpose of performing or facilitating emergency services.

NOW, THEREFORE, by the authority vested in the undersigned as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of North Carolina, IT IS ORDERED:

Section 1. The Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force

A. Establishment and Purpose

The Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force ("Task Force") is hereby established. The mission of the Task Force is to create economic stability, eliminate health disparities, and achieve environmental justice in North Carolina by convening testimony, identifying best practices, and reporting this information to the Office of the Governor.

B. Duties

The Task Force shall focus on the following areas:

1. Access to healthcare for underserved communities.
   a. Monitor and report best practices to increase access to telehealth and broadband internet-based medical treatment;
   b. Monitor and report whether North Carolinians have adequate insurance coverage in responding to COVID-19 and managing underlying health conditions; and
   c. Assess application of the "Medical Home" approach to providing comprehensive, family-centered, and culturally-competent care that meets the social, cultural, and linguistic needs of all North Carolinians.

2. Enhanced patient engagement in healthcare settings.
   a. Encourage medical professionals to engage communities of color to gather information and provide a platform for transparency and inclusion;
   b. Support and identify opportunities to increase the number of minority health professionals servicing communities of color; and
   c. Encourage increased cultural competence in the provision of care for communities of color.

3. Economic opportunities in business development and employment.
   a. Assess and report ways the state may further support historically underutilized businesses;
   b. Advance economic recovery by prioritizing actions that create quality employment opportunities for the North Carolina workforce;
   c. Assess and report opportunities for organizational capability and capacity building; and
4. Environmental Justice and Inclusion.

a. Enhance public engagement and increase public participation by low income, minority communities in Department decisions and actions;

b. Quantify health and welfare benefits of pollution reduction and identify opportunities to increase the deployment of clean energy resources;

c. Advance climate justice by prioritizing actions that equitably reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase community resilience to the impacts of climate change, and advance sustainable economic and infrastructure recovery efforts for low-income, minority and vulnerable communities; and

d. Encourage and enhance environmental justice, inclusion and equity education.

5. Create educational opportunities for communities of color in the following areas:

a. Health literacy;

b. Financial literacy; and

c. General academia.

d. In addition, the Task Force shall make recommendations on strategies to increase funding for health education in community centers servicing vulnerable communities.

6. The Task Force shall advance these goals through community engagement, corporate citizenship with North Carolina businesses and organizations, and policymaking.

7. By December 1, 2020, and every six (6) months thereafter, the Task Force shall provide to the Office of the Governor a status report on the progress and recommendations made in the focus areas determined by Section 1 of this Executive Order. The second of the bi-annual status reports will incorporate actions taken by the Task Force in response to feedback received from the Office of the Governor.

C. Membership

1. The Task Force shall be comprised of a minimum of fifteen (15) members appointed by the Governor.

2. The Governor shall designate the Chair of the Task Force.

3. The Task Force shall represent, to the extent possible, all demographics of North Carolina, and shall include the following members:

a. Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration, who shall be the Chair of the Task Force;

b. Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services or designee;

c. Director of the North Carolina Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities or designee;

d. Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality or designee;

e. Member of the Commission on Indian Affairs;

f. Member of the Hispanic Latino Council;

g. Member of North Carolina Council for Women Advisory Board;

h. Member of the NCPRO Office (created below);

i. Member of the Commission on Inclusion;

j. Representative from a North Carolina Historically Black College or University;
k. And other appropriate experts from the focus areas listed above.

4. The Governor may appoint additional members to the Task Force.

5. All members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

D. **Meetings and Quorum**

This Task Force shall meet at least bi-monthly during the State of Emergency and quarterly thereafter. The Task Force may also meet upon the call of the Task Force Chair, or upon written request of the majority of the Task Force members. A simple majority of Task Force members shall constitute quorum to transact business.

E. **Administration**

1. The Task Force may create sub-committees.

2. The North Carolina Department of Administration shall provide necessary administrative and staff support services to the Task Force.

3. The Task Force shall serve without compensation but may receive per diem allowance and reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with state law and Office of State Budget and Management policies and regulations. During the duration of the State of Emergency, all meetings shall be held utilizing video conferencing tools approved by the North Carolina Department of Information Technology.

F. **Duration**

The Task Force shall remain in effect for two (2) years after the effective date of this Executive Order unless repealed, replaced, or rescinded by another applicable Executive Order. An Executive Order rescinding the Declaration of the State of Emergency will not automatically rescind this Section.

Section 2. **Eliminating Economic Disparities in North Carolina**

A. **North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office.** The undersigned has established an office specifically designated to focus on North Carolina's recovery from the pandemic. Given the disproportionate impact of this pandemic on minority communities, it is more vital than ever to ensure that all communities benefit from any relief. The North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office ("NCPRO") shall ensure that all resources provided for COVID-19 relief shall be distributed accordingly. NCPRO shall work closely with each state agency to ensure equitable delivery of COVID-19 related stimulus and resources. Additionally, NCPRO leadership, staff and policies shall be inclusive and representative of all communities.

1. Understanding that small businesses and historically underutilized businesses are essential to North Carolina communities and economy, NCPRO shall work with the Historically Underutilized Business program within the North Carolina Department of Administration to advocate for the economic recovery of minority-owned businesses in the state.

2. NCPRO shall work with all agencies and organizations distributing pandemic recovery funds, including the Golden LEAF Foundation and the NC Rural Center, to ensure those who receive and administer state relief funds distribute these funds equitably for the benefit of all North Carolina communities. In addition, NCPRO shall work with the North Carolina Department of Commerce to ensure Community Development Block Grant funding is equitably distributed to all North Carolina communities.

B. **Historically Underutilized Business Office.** The critical need to prioritize the use of historically underutilized businesses to create and maintain a vibrant, sustainable, and diverse business community in North Carolina was previously recognized in Exec. Order No. 25, 32 N.C. Reg. 958-962 (Nov. 15, 2017) issued on November 2, 2017. The disparate impact of COVID-19 makes it more important than ever for the state to support and encourage the continued growth and
development of these businesses. The undersigned therefore tasks the North Carolina Department of Administration, through its Historically Underutilized Business Office ("HUB Office"), to develop a plan to emphasize economic recovery for small businesses, specifically including historically underutilized businesses, from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The HUB Office shall coordinate with, and assist, NCPRO and NCDHHS to ensure that historically underutilized small businesses have access to all available economic recovery funds and access to contract opportunities with the State of North Carolina arising from the economic recovery effort. Specifically, the undersigned directs the HUB Office to undertake the following actions:

1. Support and assist businesses that are historically underutilized and lack adequate access to opportunities with tools and resources to promote economic recovery and procurement of state contracts. To further ensure that small historically underutilized businesses have equal access to opportunities, $500,000 shall be allocated to the HUB Office to start a small business enterprise program.

2. In partnership with the North Carolina Institute for Minority Economic Development, the Golden Leaf Foundation, and other appropriate parties, develop and make available a listing of certified small historically underutilized businesses with 100 employees or less and an annual net income of not more than $1,500,000, after "Cost of Goods Sold" is deducted;

3. Streamline the certification of small historically underutilized businesses through the HUB program to accelerate meeting the needs of firms adversely impacted by COVID-19;

4. Work directly with the State Construction Office and State Purchasing Office to identify construction, purchasing and professional services contracts by state agencies that do not exceed $250,000 to increase access to opportunities for small businesses. To further enhance and improve the State’s good faith efforts to recruit diverse businesses for participation in public projects, the State Construction Office and State Purchasing Office shall develop a rule to require all projects to include at least one bid or proposal from a certified small historically underutilized business. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Secretary of the Department of Administration or her designee.

Section 3: Eliminating Health Disparities in NC

A. The North Carolina Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities was legislatively established in 1992 and tasked with the responsibility of reducing and eliminating health disparities among all racial and ethnic minorities and other underserved populations in North Carolina. The undersigned tasks NCDHHS to reevaluate and elevate their mission, and to request appropriate funding and resources to meet that updated need.

B. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and other contracted entities shall assure that COVID-19 testing and related services are accessible to all communities. NCDHHS will prioritize testing for high-risk settings and communities where increased exposure and conditions leading to adverse risk of complications and death from COVID-19 are present.

NCDHHS shall take the following actions:

1. Preventative Care and Other Eligible Health Services
   a. NCDHHS and other agencies of state government responsible for administering funding pursuant to the 2020 COVID-19 Recovery Act, N.C. Sess. Laws 2020-4, shall authorize use of such funds for the provision of COVID-19 related services including screening for underlying chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, hypertension, high blood pressure, heart disease, pulmonary illness, and others conditions associated with more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. These services include related and primary health services when provided to uninsured North Carolinians by healthcare providers, including community health centers, local health departments, rural health centers and free and charitable clinics, during the COVID-19 emergency.
2. Testing
   a. Provide necessary testing supplies and appropriate personal protective equipment ("PPE")
      to health care provider organizations and systems, community health centers and nonprofit
      providers servicing vulnerable communities in the state.
   b. Partner with community organizations and others to establish testing sites in locations that
      are trusted and easy to access by communities of color.
   c. Update reporting processes to increase the inclusion of racial and ethnic demographic data.
   d. Support connecting individuals tested with comprehensive health care to address
      underlying chronic conditions — including behavioral health services.

3. Tracing
   a. Contact tracers should reflect the demographics of the communities they serve where
      possible to engender trust and engagement in controlling COVID-19 spread.
   b. NCDHHS will work with its contact tracing contractors to promote diversity in their hiring
      practices and cultural competency components in their trainings.
   c. Impacts on communities of color.
   d. The Division of Public Health shall regularly review all available data to determine the
      impacts on communities of color, with a particular emphasis on high COVID-19 case
      volume and deaths.
   e. NCDHHS shall use the collected data to allocate resources accordingly with a goal of
      mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and lessening adverse health impacts on racial and
      ethnic minorities.

Section 4: Eliminating Disparities in North Carolina

A. North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. In response to the pandemic, the North
   Carolina Department of Environmental Quality ("DEQ") evaluated the feasibility and advisability
   of holding public hearings and meetings for actions pending decisions by the DEQ within statutory
   or regulatory timelines. The priority in this evaluation has been the health and safety of the public
   and DEQ staff. Recognizing the need to balance environmentally-sound economic development
   across North Carolina and provide public participation opportunities to low-income, minority
   communities, and those vulnerable to COVID-19, DEQ identified two specific areas of concern:
   permitting actions of significant public interest; and permits that propose new environmental
   impacts located near low-income, minority, and COVID-19 vulnerable communities. In each
   case, and in accordance with the State's phased approach, DEQ shall continue its work to enhance
   the safety of all North Carolinians in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

   The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed, once again, the stark inequities in communities across the
   country and here in North Carolina. While this pandemic exacerbates institutional inequities,
   COVID-19 also creates an opportunity to address them. DEQ in partnership with the Secretary's
   Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Board commits to partner with and support and inform
   communities about this effort to eliminate social, environmental, economic, and health disparities.
   To achieve this goal, DEQ shall:

   1. Lead the State's effort to create a common discourse on environmental justice,
   2. Identify communities of concern for purposes of all State related actions,
   3. Coordinate with Executive Agencies on how to integrate environmental justice considerations
      into existing and future policies, programs, and procedures; and
   4. Create lasting institutional structures for agencies to address equality, equity and justice for all
      North Carolinians.
B. North Carolina Department of Public Safety ("DPS") will continue its work to enhance the safety of all North Carolinians in preparing for and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the state coordinating agency during this declared State of Emergency, DPS has provided a broad spectrum of services to support vulnerable and underrepresented communities, including communities of color, in addressing pandemic related issues. Accordingly, the undersigned hereby directs DPS to continue the following activities:

1. The Division of Emergency Management shall continue to coordinate multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional efforts of the State Emergency Response Team to support medical surge, PPE procurement and distribution, food supply chain protection, logistics support for food banks and local school system feeding operations, and housing and sheltering for vulnerable populations;

2. The Division of Emergency Management shall continue to ensure improved access during press conferences and broader information sharing by utilizing American Sign Language and Spanish language translation and interpretation services to include providing information in accordance with ADA compliance standards;

3. The Division of Emergency Management shall continue to ensure equity among all communities, particularly vulnerable and underrepresented communities, in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. While natural disasters such as extreme storms and flooding disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, COVID-19 and climate change increase the exposure of these communities to adverse impacts;

4. The North Carolina National Guard shall continue to provide expert planning, logistical support, and personnel where feasible to support mass testing, food distribution, and warehouse operations to support impacted and vulnerable communities across the state;

5. DPS law enforcement agencies shall continue to educate sworn law enforcement personnel on ways to effectively engage communities and reduce ethnic and racial intimidation originating from enforcing mask and face covering provisions related to the pandemic;

6. The North Carolina Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice shall continue its many efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in adult and juvenile facilities; and

7. Successful reentry programs for persons leaving prison is critical to their post-release success and under normal circumstances can be difficult. DPS with the State Reentry Council Collaborative shall work with local agencies to help these individuals navigate in a COVID-19 influenced society.

C. Office of the Governor, Office of Public Engagement. Outreach and education can directly impact outcomes. The undersigned tasks the Office of Public Engagement to work with state agencies, faith leaders, stakeholder groups and community leaders to undertake the following outreach missions:

1. Increase awareness and education about how COVID-19 spreads, the dangers of preexisting conditions, and the heightened importance of social distancing for high-risk populations to help reduce the impact of the virus.

2. Increase awareness and education about COVID-19 relief services and resources.

3. Increase awareness and education about eliminating disparities.

D. All cabinet agencies. The undersigned encourages all cabinet agencies who receive funding meant to provide COVID-19 aid or relief to collaborate with the appropriate entities to ensure funding is directed towards increasing economic stability and the elimination of disparities in communities of color in North Carolina. All cabinet agencies shall work to reduce and eliminate social, environmental, economic and health disparities.
Section 5. Savings Clause

If any provision of this Executive Order or its application to any person or circumstances is held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, this invalidity does not affect any other provision or application of this Executive Order, which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application. To achieve this purpose, the provisions of this Executive Order are declared to be severable.

Section 6. Distribution

I hereby order that this Executive Order be: (1) distributed to the news media and other organizations calculated to bring its contents to the attention of the general public; (2) promptly filed with the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, the Secretary of State, and the superior court clerks in the counties to which it applies, unless the circumstances of the State of Emergency would prevent or impede such filing; and (3) distributed to others as necessary to ensure proper implementation of this Executive Order.

Section 7. Effective Date

This Executive Order is effective immediately. Unless otherwise expressly stated in another Executive Order, Section 1 of this Executive Order shall remain in effect as stated in Section 1. The remainder of this Executive Order shall remain in effect for the duration of the State of Emergency or unless repealed, replaced, or rescinded by another applicable Executive Order.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in the City of Raleigh, this 4th day of June in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty.

[Signature]
Governor

ATTEST:

[Signature]
Secretary of State