

Uganda

Public Health Act

Public Health (Control of COVID-19) Rules, 2020

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Statutory Instrument 52 of 2020

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Commenced on 24 March 2020

[Up to date as at 24 March 2020]

In exercise of powers conferred upon the Minister by sections 11 and 27 of the Public Health Act, Cap.281, these Rules are made this 24th day of March, 2020.

1. Title

These Rules may be cited as the Public Health (Control of COVID-19) Rules, 2020.

2. Interpretation

In this Order—

"**local authority**" means a local council as defined in the Local Governments Act, Cap 243;

"**medical officer**" means any registered medical practitioner in the employment of Government, but does not include a licensed medical practitioner;

"**medical officer of health**" means the Director General of Health Services or any medical officer in the employment of Government and includes any member of the Government medical subordinate staff being a registered or licensed medical practitioner or other medical practitioner appointed by the Director General of Health Services to act as such in any district;

"**medical practitioner**" means a person who is registered or licensed as such under any law in force in Uganda, governing the registration of medical practitioners.

3. Responsibility for notification of notifiable diseases

- (1) Every owner, person in charge of, or occupier of premises, and every employer and head of a household, who becomes aware that any person who is residing on his or her premises or who is in his or her employment, is suffering from COVID-19, shall immediately notify a medical officer or a medical practitioner or take that person to a medical officer or a medical practitioner for treatment.
- (2) Any local authority who becomes aware or who has reason to suspect that any person residing in his or her area is suffering from COVID-19, shall immediately notify a medical officer or a medical practitioner or take that person to a medical officer or a medical practitioner for treatment.

4. Medical officer of health and medical practitioner to notify

- (1) Every medical officer of health or medical practitioner who attends to, or who is called in to visit a patient, shall immediately, on becoming aware that the patient is suffering from COVID-19, refer the patient to the nearest regional referral hospital.
- (2) Every medical officer of health or medical practitioner who becomes aware, by post-mortem examination or otherwise, that any person has died of COVID-19, shall immediately inform the head of the household, or the occupier of the premises, or any person who has been in attendance on the deceased person, of the infectious nature of COVID-19 and of the precautions to be taken to prevent its transmission to other

persons.

5. Powers for the control of COVID-19

Where any case of COVID-19 is referred to a regional referral hospital, the medical officer of health shall immediately visit and inspect the premises where that person resides and may—

- (a) order all persons who have been in contact with the person to remain on the premises where the person was at the time of infection; or
- (b) cause those persons to be removed to a regional referral hospital or other suitable place provided for the reception of persons suffering from COVID-19, or for quarantine.

6. Power of search

- (1) A medical officer or any health inspector, or other person acting on the written instructions of a medical officer, may enter any premises in order to search for any case of COVID-19, or to inquire whether there is or has been on the premises, any case of COVID-19.
- (2) Where any health inspector or other person discovers any case of COVID-19, he or she shall report the discovery to a medical officer.

7. Power of medical officer of health to disinfect premises

Where a building or premises has clinical signs of contamination with COVID-19 or where a medical officer of health has information of contamination of a building or premises, the medical officer of health may decontaminate or cause the decontamination of the affected building or premises.

8. Disposal of bodies

The bodies of all persons who die from COVID-19 shall be disposed of in conformity with the directions of the medical officers of health.

9. Control of public gatherings, meetings, etc

- (1) The places and the premises and the activities, events, meetings and gatherings, as the case may be, specified in this subrule shall be closed or banned, respectively, until the date specified—
 - (a) schools and institutions of higher learning, until 18th April 2020;
 - (b) bars and cinema halls, until 16th April 2020;
 - (c) prayers in churches and mosques and open air prayers, until 16th April 2020;
 - (d) marriage ceremonies, wedding parties, vigils and funerals, until 18th April 2020, except where the people gathered are not more than 10;
 - (e) public meetings, including political rallies, conferences and cultural related meetings, until 18th April 2020;
 - (f) indoor and outdoor concerts and sports events, until 16th April 2020; and
 - (g) trading in live animals at places designated for this purpose by a local authority, until 18th April 2020.
- (2) Where a place or premises specified in subrule (1) is open contrary to the provision or where any activity, event, meeting or gathering specified in subrule (1) is held contrary to the provision, the person in charge of the place or the event, meeting or gathering, as the case may be, commits an offence, and is liable, on conviction, to imprisonment for a period not exceeding two months.

10. Spitting prohibited

No person shall spit in any public building or in any place to which the public has access.

11. Escape from isolation or quarantine

- (1) Where a person who is confined in a place designated for isolation or for quarantine for COVID–19 escapes from that place, a medical officer shall immediately notify the police and request the police to apprehend and return the person to the designated place.
- (2) Any person who—
 - (a) aids a person who is confined in a place designated for isolation or for quarantine for COVID–19, in escaping or attempting to escape from the place; or
 - (b) conveys anything or causes anything to be conveyed into a place designated for isolation or quarantine for COVID–19 with intent to facilitate the escape of any person confined in the place, commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment for two months.

12. Carriers of disease

- (1) In this rule, "carrier" includes any person who, although he or she does not at the time present the clinical symptoms of COVID–19, has been proved, or is believed on reasonable grounds, to be harbouring the infection and consequently to be liable to cause the spread of COVID–19.
- (2) Any person who is believed or suspected, on reasonable grounds, by a medical officer of health to be a carrier shall provide, on request to the medical officer of health, or to any person authorised by the medical officer of health, in writing, every facility for obtaining specimens of blood, excreta, discharges or other material required for examination and investigation.
- (3) Where a medical officer of health determines that any person is believed or suspected on reasonable grounds to be a carrier and that the necessary examinations and investigations cannot be properly carried out at the house or place of residence of that person, the medical officer of health may order that person to proceed or to be removed to a hospital or other suitable place for the purpose of examination and investigation and to remain or to be detained in that place for such reasonable period as may be required for that purpose.
- (4) Every carrier shall at all times observe and give effect to all reasonable instructions given to him or her by the medical officer in regard to the disposal of his or her infectious materials and the cleansing of the articles used by the carrier, and any other precautions for preventing the spread of infection.
- (5) Every carrier, who so wishes, shall within seven days before the change, inform the local authority and the medical officer of his or her intention to change his or her place of residence or work and of his or her intended new place of residence or work, which shall in any case be within the district.

13. Infected area

- (1) The Minister may, by notice in the Gazette and in a newspaper with a wide circulation in the infected area, declare any place to be an infected area, and regulate the activities that may be conducted in the infected area, where it is deemed necessary for preventing the spread of or for the eradication of COVID–19.
- (2) All persons residing in a declared infected area shall undergo such medical inspection or examination, as the medical officer of health may direct.
- (3) A medical officer of health may keep all or any persons in a declared infected area under observation in any place selected by him or her or under such surveillance as he or she may consider necessary.
- (4) Where any person from a declared infected area is placed under observation or surveillance, the period of observation or surveillance shall be 28 days.

14. Duration of Rules

These Rules shall expire on notification by the Minister.

DR. JANE RUTH ACENG,

Minister of Health.