Coronavirus and Public Health Powers

In the face of Coronavirus, remain calm and wash your hands. Panic never works. And if you’re elderly, take special precautions. Then consider this: in 2001, one month after 9/11, federal health officials asked states to pass a troubling proposal they’d worked on for three years.

The Model State Emergency Health Powers Act would suspend various individual rights during a declared public health emergency. It let people be detained with or without a court order. It forced into quarantine people who refused to be examined, treated, tested, and vaccinated. It required the police to enforce public health orders and let the state government commandeer private property. Forty states passed some version of it. Before Coronavirus hits, check out your state’s emergency health powers act.


