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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

IN RE: HEARINGS BY VIDEO OR
TELEPHONE AS AUTHORIZED BY
THE CARES ACT

GENERAL ORDER 04-23

This General Order relates to the Court’s prior response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak and the enactment of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES Act”) on March 27, 2020. Pursuant to Sections 15002(b)(1) and 15002(b)(2)(A) of the Act, on March 29, 2020, the Judicial Conference of the United States found that emergency conditions due to the national emergency declared by the President under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.) with respect to COVID–19 will materially affect the Federal courts generally.

1 On March 30, 2020, this Court issued General Order No. 04-20 finding that, pursuant to §
2 15002(b)(2)(A) of the CARES Act, certain criminal proceedings could not be conducted in
3 person without seriously jeopardizing public health and safety. The Court therefore authorized
4 the use of video conferences or telephone conferences for those proceedings. This authorization
5 was renewed on June 25, 2020, in General Order No. 09-20, on September 24, 2020, in General
6 Order No. 14-20, on December 23, 2020, in General Order No. 17-20, on March 23, 2021, in
7 General Order No. 06-21, on June 21, 2021, in General Order No. 09-21, on September 23, 2021
8 in General Order 13-21, on December 22, 2021 in General Order 14-21, on March 22, 2022, in
9 General Order 05-22, on June 20, 2022 in General Order 06-22, on September 15, 2022 in
10 General Order 10-22, and on December 15, 2022 in General Order 13-22.

11 Ninety days after such an order, the chief judge must “review the authorization and
12 determine whether to extend the authorization.” § 15002(b)(3)(A). I have reviewed the current
13 procedures of the Court and have considered the ongoing impact of COVID-19. I also am aware
14 the President announced his intention to terminate the national emergency concerning the
15 COVID-19 pandemic on May 11, 2023, but that “an orderly transition is critical to the health and
16 safety of the Nation.” See [https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-
17 actions/2023/02/10/notice-on-the-continuation-of-the-national-emergency-concerning-the-
18 coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-pandemic-3/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/02/10/notice-on-the-continuation-of-the-national-emergency-concerning-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-pandemic-3/). Therefore, in the interest of public health and
19 safety, the procedures set forth in General Order 04-20 shall be extended another 90 days from
20 today’s date.

21 Notwithstanding this extension, the Court’s authority under the CARES Act shall
22 terminate on the earlier of (a) 30 days after the date on which the national emergency ends under
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1 the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.) or (b) when the Judicial Conference
2 finds that the federal courts are no longer materially affected.

3 If the national emergency declaration continues beyond May 11, 2023, this order shall be
4 effective until June 15, 2023.

5 IT IS SO ORDERED.

6 Dated this 15th day of March, 2023.

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10 David G. Estudillo
11 Chief United States District Judge
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