

## Coronavirus – What do we know and what do we need to do?

### I. The Basics

#### A. What is coronavirus 2019?

- It is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person

#### B. How is it spread?

- The virus spreads mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- You may contract it by touching an infected surface or object and then touching your mouth, nose, or possibly your eyes
- [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html)

#### C. What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms usually appear in days 2-14
- mild to severe respiratory illness
- fever
- cough
- difficult breathing or shortness of breath
- persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- new confusion or inability to arouse
- bluish lips or face
- severe complications can include pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death

#### D. Who is more at risk?

- Frankly all of us
- We have a duty to take actions now to reduce the spread
- Difficult to know if you have the disease because few tests available
- Elderly
- People with heart disease, diabetes or lung disease
- People with compromised immune systems

#### E. What are the Current Stats?

- Over 3000 cases and 61 deaths in the US according to CDC
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>
- Cases reported in all States except W. Va.
- 13 positive cases in Arizona; 3 in Pima County
- 183 people tested in Arizona; 121 ruled out; 49 pending results
- Over 33 states have closed schools
- NY, Vermont set to close this week
- Arizona – Salpointe and other schools closed, others expected to follow
- Fed has cut interest rate to 0% in light of crisis

## II. What If I Feel Sick? These tips apply to employees and anyone else

### A. Stay Home Except to Get Medical Care

### B. Separate Yourself from Others and Animals

- No evidence that you can give virus to pets
- You could cough or pet animal and others in your house could pet and potentially contract virus
- Call your PCP first and follow their advice
- Use Virtual doctors to diagnose your symptoms and advise you on what to do

### C. Wear a facemask or scarf if possible

### D. Cover your Coughs and Sneezes

### E. Avoid Sharing Household Items

### F. Write Down Your Symptoms and When they Begin

### G. Monitor Your Symptoms

- **Seek prompt medical care if illness worsens**
- **BEFORE you seek care, call your PCP**
- **Check with facility to see if they wish to triage curbside**
- **DON'T go to hospital for testing without calling first**
  - May not have test**
  - May transmit virus to others**
- **Call Arizona Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 (they have been contracted to handle phone calls on COVID-19 on behalf of the Arizona Department of Health Services)**
- **Or call Pima County Health Department for updates: 520-626-6016**

### H. Clean Your Hands

### I. Clean All High-Touch Surfaces

- Counters
- Tabletops
- Door handles
- Faucets
- Toilets
- Remotes
- Keyboards
- Tablets
- Phones

### **III. What Should an Employer Do to Prepare?**

#### **A. Circulate Notice to Quell Fears**

- **Explain Danger is Low but Real**
- **Explain Employees and their safe is top priority**

#### **B. Keep your Emotions in Check**

- **Employees look to their bosses for direction and support**
- **Set a good tone for your team**
- **Be calm**
- **Keep any fears or panic in private**
- **Provide accurate information to your employees**

#### **C. Have a Plan**

- **Project realistic optimism**
- **But have plan that anticipates bad and worst-case scenarios**
- **Better to be prepared; conveys confidence to clients and your team**
- **Adjust plan as circumstances change**
- **Establish policies that ensures employees work safely and smartly**
- **Talk to your Team – Encourage Empathy**
  - Provide team with foundation of support**
  - Build trust with your employees**
  - Listen to your team**
  - Adjust your plan based on team’s input**
- **Empower your team**
  - Allow team to share PTO to help others who have no accrued PTO**
  - If team requests and not a hardship, allow negative PTO but explain that employees must repay if quit or let go before accrue PTO to eliminate negative balance**
  - Have employees sign payroll deduction authorization to apply any negative PTO balance against their final paycheck**
  - But remember to pay minimum wage for any hours worked**
- **Consider Teleworking Options**
  - Evaluate, if possible, for your business**
  - If possible, then investigate costs (e.g., additional licenses)**
  - If proceed, explain to clients what this means and how their info will be protected**
  - Consult with your attorney to ensure policy is uniformly and fairly administered**
  - Consult with your insurance co. to verify workers comp coverage at employee’s homes**
- **Consider Staggered Work Shifts**
- **Consider Reduced Hours – Furloughs / Layoffs/ UnET benefits**
  - Explain sacrifice will help all**
  - Allow PTO / Paid Sick Time to allow full pay**
  - Explain impact if Federal Government enacts paid sick leave for 50 or fewer employees**
    - Will give 2 more weeks of pay**
    - Explain company will seek benefits to reimburse time off**
    - Explain company will ask for employee’s help to submit forms for reimbursement**

#### D. Other Considerations

- Plan to decrease the spread of the virus
- Identify and communicate your objectives to:
  - i. reduce transmission among staff,
  - ii. protect people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications, and
  - iii. maintain business operations
- Eliminate or postpone all unnecessary travel
- **Explore videoconference or telephone meetings instead of in-person**
  - i. **Clients and employees will appreciate the protective measure**
- **Prepare for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members, dismissals of early childhood programs and K-12 schools due to high levels of absenteeism or illness**
  - i. **Identify essential business functions and how to attain same when experiencing high absenteeism**
  - ii. **Cross-train employees to do other jobs in case of absences**
  - iii. **Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers or temporarily suspend some of your operations if necessary)**
- How to handle EE requests?
  - i. **PTO – if accrued EE can use as they deem necessary, subject to business needs and written policy restrictions**
  - ii. **LOA – depends on written policy; not required to provide this benefit**
    - **Exception if ADA issue**
    - **Being out sick may or may not qualify for protection under ADA, FMLA or WC**
    - **Depends on circumstances**
    - **Need to consult with your attorney on what you can and cannot do**
  - iii. **PST under AZ law – ER cannot ask for backup documents**
    - **Can only ask if time off should be noted as paid sick time**
    - **Request docs if 3+ days off**
  - iv. **FMLA = need to meet prereqs for EE (1 year of ET and 1250 hours worked in prior 12 months and ER has 50+ EEs in 75-mile radius)**
  - v. **ADA = must have a disability that affects a major life activity**
- If more than one location, empower local managers to make appropriate decisions to meet needs of that office
- Consult local, state and federal health agencies to ensure you have accurate and timely information to adjust your plan as needed and based on changing circumstances
- Share your plan with employees and explain what human resources policies, workplace and leave flexibilities, and pay and benefits will be available to them.
- Consult with other businesses, your chamber of commerce, and trade associations to improve community response efforts and to adjust your plan as needed
- Designate a COVID-19 Team for employees to consult regarding issues
- Create phone tree or email distribution lists to ensure complete and accurate delivery of updated information to your team
- Cancel or postpone any large events for employees or customers
- Read as much as possible to stay ahead of the pandemic or to adjust your plan on the fly