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
   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
      • 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
         i. May not have test
         ii. 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
     i. Provide team with foundation of support
     ii. Build trust with your employees
     iii. Listen to your team
     iv. Adjust your plan based on team’s input
   • Empower your team
     i. Allow team to share PTO to help others who have no accrued PTO
     ii. 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
     iii. Have employees sign payroll deduction authorization to apply any negative PTO balance against their final paycheck
     iv. But remember to pay minimum wage for any hours worked
   • Consider Teleworking Options
     i. Evaluate, if possible, for your business
     ii. If possible, then investigate costs (e.g., additional licenses)
     iii. If proceed, explain to clients what this means and how their info will be protected
     iv. Consult with your attorney to ensure policy is uniformly and fairly administered
     v. 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
     i. Explain sacrifice will help all
     ii. Allow PTO / Paid Sick Time to allow full pay
     iii. Explain impact if Federal Government enacts paid sick leave for 50 or fewer employees
       1. Will give 2 more weeks of pay
       2. Explain company will seek benefits to reimburse time off
       3. 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