

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) FACT SHEET
FOR BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYERS
3/5/2020

Coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19, is a serious public health threat. Cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed in the United States, primarily in travelers from affected countries and quarantined repatriates as well as close contacts of COVID-19 patients, with recent reports of community spread in several states. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has indicated that as more and more states experience community spread of COVID-19, successful containment within our communities becomes more difficult. Ultimately, we expect we will see ongoing, sustained community spread in the U.S. and in DuPage County, and we are preparing accordingly. **We would like to make you aware of important and timely measures to help keep our businesses and workplaces safe, open, and operational.**

When sustained transmission in U.S. communities is identified, the U.S. response strategy will enhance implementation of actions to slow spread in communities. Implementation of basic precautions of infection control and prevention, including staying home when ill and practicing respiratory and hand hygiene, will become increasingly important. These strategies are referred to as **non-pharmaceutical interventions, or NPIs**.

Non-pharmaceutical interventions can be disruptive and might have societal and economic impact on individual persons and communities. Importantly, however, studies have shown that **early layered implementation of these interventions can reduce the community spread and impact** of infectious pathogens such as pandemic influenza, even when specific pharmaceutical treatments and vaccines are not available. These measures might be **critical to avert widespread COVID-19 transmission** in U.S. communities. There are three categories of NPIs: **1) Personal NPIs** which include personal protective measures you can take every day to keep from getting sick, like staying home when you are sick, covering your coughs and sneezes, and washing hands often with soap and water, **2) Community NPIs** which include social distancing measures designed to keep people who are sick away from others as well as school closures and dismissals, and **3) Environmental NPIs** which includes surface cleaning measures that remove germs from frequently touched surfaces and objects.

Similar to the federal efforts outlined, the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) will also maintain a dual approach where we continue measures to contain this disease but also employ strategies to minimize the anticipated impact on our communities. **Non-pharmaceutical interventions will be the most important tools in our response to this virus.** These interventions may vary at the community level depending on local conditions. What is appropriate for one community or workplace seeing local transmission won't necessarily be appropriate for a community or workplace where no local transmission has occurred. This parallel, proactive approach of containment and mitigation will delay the emergence of community spread while simultaneously reducing its ultimate impact.

(continued)

WHAT BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYERS CAN DO:

In the absence of presence of the virus in our community, there are steps that we would encourage you to take now, as well as actions that will prepare you, if/when the virus does begin circulating in our county. CDC is recommending the use of the “Community Mitigation Guidelines to Prevent Pandemic Influenza — United States, 2017” (available at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/rr/rr6601a1.htm). This document looked at **what can be done at the individual and community level during a pandemic when a vaccine or proven medical treatment for the disease are not available**. This document provides a framework for our national and local response strategy.

Drawing from these guidelines, **CDC has developed this business-specific guidance document, “Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), February 2020”** (available at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html). **At this time, we encourage all businesses and employers to assure that key prevention strategies are included in your emergency operations plan, and that you are promoting the use of the following:**

- **Actively encourage sick employees to stay home**
- **Separate sick employees**
- **Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees**
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning**
- **Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps**

The above items as well as consideration of/planning for outbreak prevention and response, including emergency communication strategies, are covered in this CDC guidance. All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illness and lower the impact of COVID-19 in their workplace in the event of an outbreak in the US. For questions regarding work-related or personal travel considerations, **CDC’s information and updates about COVID-19 for travelers** is available at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.

At this time, most people in the United States have little immediate risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. However, some people are worried about the disease. Fear and anxiety can lead to social stigma towards Chinese or other Asian Americans. DCHD emphasizes the importance of **preventing stigma and bullying** by protecting **dignity** and **privacy**, and treating people with **respect, fairness, and compassion**. To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace and in our community, **do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin**. CDC information and resources on stigma prevention are available at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/related-stigma.html.

DuPage County residents with concerns about exposure or specific symptoms are encouraged to call the **DCHD Communicable Disease and Epidemiology (CDE) program at (630) 221-7553 (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or (630) 682-7400 after hours**, so specific situations may be evaluated on a **case-by-case basis**. Additionally, for anyone feeling emotional distress or in need of emotional support, the **DCHD Crisis Hotline (630) 627-1700 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year**.

More information on COVID-19 is available at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html and www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus . Thank you for your time and cooperation.