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Business Briefing on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

In response to the coronavirus disease, the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) is working with many partners, including the Governor's office, health care systems, EMS, DEMA, state, local and federal agencies, schools, legislators and the business community. Our efforts are now focused on mitigating the impact of coronavirus disease 2019 in our state. You can get additional information in three ways:

- Find updates, FAQs and downloadable materials at **DPH's coronavirus webpage: de.gov/coronavirus**
- The **Division of Public Health opened a public call center at 1-866-408-1899. People with a hearing impairment can call 7-1-1.** The call center is open daily have a recorded message after-hours.
- DPH also will receive **public email inquiries and questions at DPHcall@delaware.gov**

Steps Businesses Should Take

If employers haven't already, now is the time to:

- Review plans to operate with adaptations such as telework and flexible sick leave policies that permit employees to stay home and care for a sick family member.
- Review other contingency or emergency operations plans.
- Communicate policies and plans with employees.
- Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace is able to operate even if key staff are absent.
- Have a plan in place if an employee does get sick at the workplace.
- Consider not requiring a health care provider's note for employees with an acute respiratory illness.

Most importantly, in the event of an outbreak locally, we will need employers to stress to employees that they not come to work when they are sick. We recognize that is a difficult ask – especially for small businesses – and for employees whose paychecks depend on every hour that they do work. But limiting public interactions of people who are sick will be an important mitigation strategy.



Our Public Health officials know this is a rapidly evolving situation in the U.S. and across the world, and that recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are subject to frequent change.

What Employers Can Urge Employees to Do to Minimize the Spread of Illness

Delaware is experiencing a particularly serious flu season, with more than 5,500 lab-confirmed cases and 11 deaths statewide. In addition to encouraging Delawareans to get their flu shot, the Division of Public Health recommends these everyday measures to prevent the spread of all germs, which also would slow the spread of coronavirus disease:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hand. If you use a tissue, dispose of it right away.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water, including the backs of your hands and under your nails. Or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do not touch your face, eyes or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean surfaces at work, home or school that you use often.
- Stay home when you are sick and avoid being around well people.
- If you are healthy, the CDC does not recommend buying or using face masks. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms.

The symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms (like the common cold) to people becoming severely ill and dying.

For more information and updates related to COVID-19, visit the DPH website at de.gov/coronavirus, where materials can be found in English, Simplified Chinese/Mandarin, Spanish and Haitian-Creole. In addition to updates on the global coronavirus disease outbreak, the website also contains tips for Delawareans, FAQs, and the number of returning travelers that DPH is currently monitoring, which is being updated regularly.