

TO: All Mahoning County Appointing Authorities and Department Heads

FROM: The Mahoning County Board of Commissioners

DATE: Monday, March 16, 2020

RE: **Time and Attendance and Health Benefits in the Coronavirus Workplace**

Effectively immediately and until further notice, the Mahoning County Board of Commissioners will be mirroring recommendations from Governor Mike DeWine's office into their policies while dealing with, and mitigating the spread of the Coronavirus in the workplace. You are being sent this information as a courtesy and we urge you to consider these options if viable for your department.

Work: Employees are expected to come to work and continue with normal operations so as to serve the community who rely on our services.

High Risk Individuals: Employees with serious chronic medical conditions (heart or lung disease, cancer, diabetes, etc.) may contact their Appointing Authority regarding possible workplace accommodations.

Illness: The "CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e., cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately." According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) the County may ask employees who report feeling ill or who call in sick whether they are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Employees who show signs of flu or cold-like symptoms (fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough) should stay home. These symptoms may indicate that the employee should seek medical treatment. While these symptoms are not always associated with COVID-19, supervisors and employees **must** exercise their best judgment, err on the side of caution but avoid panic, and not substitute their judgment for that of medical professionals.

Employees shall utilize accrued sick leave, and not return to work until symptoms have resolved. Employees without sufficient sick time can use vacation, compensatory or personal time as an alternative. Employees without adequate accrued leave balances will utilize leave without pay. Going into an unpaid status will not be grounds for discipline. Also, employees need to inform their Supervisor of their need for leave.

An employee who is absent three (3) or more days consecutively with an acute respiratory illness shall not be required to present a physician's statement to verify the illness upon return to work.

If the County has reason to believe an employee is absent from work due to contracting COVID-19, or to take care of an eligible family member that has contracted COVID-19, the FMLA process should be initiated.

During a pandemic, some employees who fall ill will recover from the pandemic. These persons may be invaluable as they have a resistance to the virus. However, it is important to verify their health prior to returning to work. A note from the Doctor or other appropriate health care professional may be required prior to the employee returning to their job responsibilities.

Employers should maintain the confidentiality of those diagnosed with COVID-19 in compliance with applicable statutes and regulations governing the confidentiality of personal health information.

Health Care Benefits: If an employee does not have adequate leave balances, are in an unpaid status, and must remain off from work, their health care coverage will remain intact. Upon their return to work, they will be billed back for missed employee-share of the health care premiums.

All participants in the County's medical plans (Nos. 1 through 4) will be covered for all diagnostic testing for the coronavirus, as long as the testing has been ordered by a medical provider. All member cost sharing, including co-pays, co-insurance and deductibles for these tests have been waived.

Travel: Employees should notify the employer if they are traveling to international locations for personal reasons so that the employer is aware of employees who are going to areas that expose them to the disease. If an employee has traveled to or through an international location and has the intent to return to work, regardless of whether the location has a Travel Health Notice, they must contact their Appointing Authority before returning to work.

Managers/Supervisors: Managers and Supervisors should send employees home if they are showing signs of illness (fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough). Employees sent home due to illness will use their accrued sick leave. If no sick time is available, then vacation, personal or compensatory leave may be substituted. If the employee has no accrued leave balances, they will be on leave without pay.

If the Elected Official or Department Head has any additional questions or concerns, we recommend that Elected Official or Department Head consult the Prosecutor's Office to ensure compliance with Ohio law. Thank you.