

## Things to know before reading this toolkit:

- ▶ COVID-19 is preventable and treatable, but only if we ensure working people are informed and protected.
- ▶ Basic wellness practices like frequent handwashing and staying home if we're sick can help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- ▶ Working people across the country, including people on the front lines of our healthcare system, schools and airport workers, face an increased risk of exposure to illness.
- ▶ Employers must have contingency plans should working people see their workplaces closed or their hours scaled back if this health emergency grows.

## What is the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

A new coronavirus, COVID-19, has been identified as the cause of a cluster of severe pneumonia cases that emerged in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019.

Since then, the virus has spread to many countries. More cases are being identified daily and there are numerous cases of medical workers contracting the virus.

While much has been learned about COVID-19 in a few weeks, there is still a lot we don't know.

What we know is that, while COVID-19 is in the same family as MERS and SARS, the fatality rate is lower for COVID-19 in comparison to these other viruses.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

**What we know:** Symptoms include fever and/or symptoms of lower respiratory illness such as coughing or difficulty breathing. Emerging evidence suggests that many individuals with COVID-19 show no symptoms or only mild symptoms.

**What we don't know:** With some viruses, the infectious period precedes symptoms and with other viruses it coincides with symptoms – we don't know yet about COVID-19.

## How is COVID-19 transmitted?

**What we know:** Human-to-human transmission is confirmed. Asymptomatic people can transmit the virus.

**What we don't know:** Whether the disease is transmitted via contact, droplet or aerosol.

## When should we screen patients or clients for COVID-19?

### If a patient has:

- ▶ Fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness and history of travel from affected geographic areas within 14 days.
- ▶ Fever or symptoms of lower respiratory illness and close contact with a person with confirmed coronavirus illness within 14 days.
- ▶ Fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza), even if no source of exposure has been identified.

**If a patient is experiencing some of these symptoms, providers should immediately notify hospital infection control and the local/state public health department.** The CDC will help public health departments to safely collect, store and ship specimens. Currently, diagnostic testing can only be done at the CDC. Local labs should not attempt testing.

## What should we expect and demand from our employers?

Patients with suspected coronavirus illness should immediately be given a surgical mask and placed in isolation, preferably in a negative pressure room.

We do not yet know exactly how the virus is transmitted, but the CDC recommends infection control and personal protective equipment (PPE) for airborne, droplet and contact transmission – large and small infectious material can be inhaled or absorbed through mucous membranes.

Personnel working with patients with suspected or confirmed coronavirus illness should use standard precautions, contact precautions and airborne precautions – use of an N95 or stronger respirator, nitrile gloves, gown and facial shield to protect the eyes, nose and mouth from splashes. **Handwashing protocols are critical to prevent the spread of infection.**

## Demands for employers

- ▶ Employees with a cough or fever should stay home in line with infectious control policy. Such a call off should not result in an occurrence or point.
- ▶ Employees exposed to COVID-19 should be quarantined. Employees should not be required to utilize their own sick time but instead be paid regular pay by the employer to ensure that such employees do not come to work and risk further exposure. **We are calling on employers and government entities to extend the requirement for paid sick leave to 15 days.**
- ▶ Employers need to ensure they are properly and continually in-servicing employees about protocol, precautions and location of supplies. Employers need to not only have put plans into place but they need to do the work to in service their employees.

## **Demands for Employers** *(continued)*

- ▶ Place sufficient staff to provide care to patients safely.
- ▶ Implement screening protocols to promptly identify patients with symptoms and travel history or exposure history that mean the patient may have a COVID-19 infection.
- ▶ Maintain airborne infection isolation rooms so that they provide protection to staff and patients (e.g., ensuring that the rooms maintain negative pressure, ensuring the door is always kept closed).

## **What is our Union doing during this time?**

Along with our allies, we are demanding from our elected leaders...

- ▶ 15-day Paid Sick Time for ALL workers NOW.
- ▶ Meals-on-wheels program, internet access and electronic devices for students forced to stay home.
- ▶ Debt forgiveness, suspended mortgage payments, a temporary shutdown of eviction court and a moratorium on utility shut-offs.
- ▶ No more penalizing schools by basing funding on school attendance.
  - ▶ Adequate cleaning supplies and a nurse in every school.
  - ▶ Additional, significant, emergency and flexible funds to support child care and early learning programs to help protect providers, including family child care and community-based centers from crisis and closure.
- ▶ Labor management meetings with employers.

*As a union of healthcare & child care workers, we respect and care for people of all nationalities and ethnicities and realize that screening for the coronavirus must be based upon an individual's likely exposure to the virus – not their language or skin color. We will support and encourage respectful treatment of all patients and team members during this challenging period.*

We will continue to monitor the outbreak and provide additional materials to help members protect themselves and their communities.

## GOVERNMENTAL RESOURCES

### City of Chicago

#### 2017 Paid Sick Leave Ordinance

The law covers any employee who works within Chicago's city limits and who works 80 or more hours in a 120-day period. Employees must accrue one hour of sick leave for every 40 hours worked, up to 40 hours in a 12-month period. Employers with paid time off policies that meet or exceed the paid sick leave requirements are not required to provide additional paid sick leave.

**Please read more details here:**

<https://decisionhr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/City-of-Chicago-Paid-Sick-Leave.pdf>

#### Chicago Dept. of Public Health - Preparedness Checklist

**Read full list here:**

<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/HealthProtectionandResponse/COVID-19%20Guidance%20for%20Individuals%20and%20Households%2003.03.2020.pdf>

#### Chicago Dept. of Public Health - Guidance for Childcare Programs

**Read full report here:**

<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/HealthProtectionandResponse/COVID-19%20Guidance%20for%20Childcare%20Programs%2003.03.2020.pdf>

**City of Chi. COVID-19 Hotline**

**Call: 1-312-746-7425**

### Cook County

#### Cook County Earned Sick Leave Ordinance

In most cases, you are covered by this ordinance if you have worked for your employer in Cook County for at least 2 hours in any two-week period, and your employer has a place of business in Cook County. You are entitled to earn one hour of earned sick leave for every 40 hours worked for your employer in Cook County. You may use earned sick leave when you or a family member are ill, receiving medical care, or the victim of domestic violence or stalking, or a public health emergency closes work, school or daycare; You must be paid for earned sick leave at your usual rate of pay, no later than the next payroll period.

**Please read more details here:**

<https://www.cookcountyl.gov/service/earned-sick-leave-ordinance-0>

#### Chicago Park District - Available Enhanced Programming During School Closures

**Enhanced programming parks here:**

<https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/coronavirus-response#EnhancedProgrammingParks>

### State of Illinois

#### Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) Temporary Relief Unemployment

Governor JB Pritzker announced that those unemployed due to COVID-19 can 'generally qualify for unemployment benefits to the full extent permitted by federal law,' in order to mitigate the impacts of the viral disease.

**Please find benefit here:**

<https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/individuals/unemploymentInsurance/Pages/default.aspx>

**State of Illinois COVID-19 Hotline**

**Call: 1-800-889-3931**

## FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

*The situation is evolving rapidly. Please see the links below for the most up-to-date information.*

- ▶ **World Health Organization (WHO) Situation Reports:**  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>
- ▶ **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Novel Coronavirus:**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>
- ▶ **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Interim Guidance for Healthcare Workers:**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>
- ▶ **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control COVID-19 cases geographical distribution:**  
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>