

State Agency Personnel FAQs Pertaining To COVID-19

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What if I get sick?**

Stay home and get better! Follow the direction of health care professionals. As the result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) you may be eligible to use up to 80 hour of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. NOTE: The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. For additional information on this options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. You can also use sick leave. If your sick leave is exhausted, you may use other leave options including vacation and/or compensatory time. If those leave options are exhausted, other paid leave benefits, such as advance sick and vacation leave and/or catastrophic leave donation, may be available with the support of your agency leadership. Unpaid leave options include Family Medical Leave (FMLA) and leave without pay. Requests for FMLA will be handled by your agency human resources and eligibility determinations made on a case-by-case basis.

UPDATED 4.17.2020 **What if I need to care for an immediate family member who is ill and/or quarantined with COVID-19?**

Stay home and help them get better. Follow the direction of health care professionals. As the result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) you may be eligible to use up to 80 hour of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. For additional information on these two options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. You may also use sick leave, vacation leave and/or compensatory time. You should use sick leave for time devoted to caregiving. If those leave options are exhausted, other paid leave benefits, such as advance sick and vacation leave and/or catastrophic leave donation, may be available with the support of your agency leadership. If available, you may request remote work and telework for time not devoted to caregiving. Requests for FMLA will be handled by your agency human resources. At the agency head's discretion, the definition of "immediate family" may be broadened.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What if I'm not sick but directed to self-quarantine?**

If you believe you have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, please follow the direction of your health care professional. If advised to self-quarantine, as the result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) you may be eligible to use up to 80 hour of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. For additional information on this options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. Teammates may use any combination of sick leave, vacation leave, compensatory time, remote work, and telework options available to them.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What if I'm caring for a child who is not sick but at home due to a COVID-19 related closure?**

As the result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) you may be eligible to use up to 80 hour of Emergency Paid Sick Leave or may qualify to use Emergency Family and Medical Leave. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. For additional information on these two options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. You may also use vacation and/or compensatory time for time devoted to caregiving. If those leave options are exhausted, advance vacation leave may be available with the support of your agency leadership. If available, you may request remote work and telework for time not devoted to caregiving as well as a flexible work schedule. At the agency head's discretion, the definition of "immediate family" may be broadened.

UPDATED 4.1.2020 **What if I'm a person who is not sick but at risk for serious illness from COVID19?**

You should seek and follow the direction of health care professionals. Then as appropriate, you should contact your supervisor to discuss remote work and telework options. If you are unable to work or telework, you may be eligible for up to 80 hour of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. For additional information on these two options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. The CDC is a resource for [People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19](#).

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What is a public health emergency?**

In our current situation, an emergency with respect to COVID-19 declared by a Federal, State, or local authority.

NEW 4.15.2020 **What is the Families First Coronavirus Response Act? Does it apply to the State of Nebraska?**

[The Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) provides two additional leave provisions for teammates directly impacted by COVID-19:

1. Paid Sick Leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act
2. Expanded Family and Medical Leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act.

Yes, with certain exceptions, all State Teammates, full time, part time, and temporary are eligible for Paid Sick Leave and all State Teammates employed for at least 30 days are eligible for Paid Expanded Family and Medical Leave. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 What is covered by the Paid Sick Leave Provision?

The [Paid Sick Leave provisions](#) allow up to 80 hours of sick leave to teammates subject to the guidance and calculations contained in the act. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders.

Teammates who are unable to work or telework qualify for paid sick leave due to any of the following reasons:

1. Teammate is subject to federal/state/local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. Teammate is advised by health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19;
3. Teammate is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. Teammate is caring for an individual subject to (1) or (2)
5. Teammate is caring for son/daughter if the school or place of care of the son/daughter has been closed or childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions; or
6. Teammate is experiencing “any other substantially similar condition” specified by the Department of Health and Human Services.

NEW 3.31.2020 Do teammates need to use their accrued sick or other leave time first?

No, the 80 hours of Paid Sick Leave are separate to the teammates’ existing accrued sick and other leaves under state policy. It can only be used for the qualifying reasons outlined in the provision, is not added to the teammate’s sick leave balance, and will not carry over into the next year or beyond December 31, 2020.

NEW 3.31.2020 How many hours of Paid Sick Leave do teammates qualify for?

- Full time teammates = 80 hours
- Part-time teammates = equal to the number of hours that the teammate works, on average, over a 2-week period

NEW 3.31.2020 What is pay rate for the Paid Sick Leave?

- The greater of:
 - The teammate’s regular rate of pay; ○ The minimum wage under FLSA; or ○ The minimum wage in the State or locality, whichever is greater.
- Maximums
 - If being used for (1), (2), or (3)
 - \$511 per day
 - \$5,110 aggregate
 - If being used for (4), (5), or (6)
 - 2/3 of normal amount
 - \$200 per day
 - \$2,000 aggregate

NEW 3.31.2020 **What is covered by the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act?**

The [Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act](#) (EFMLA) amends the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to address COVID-19 situations. Expanded family and medical leave applies to teammates who are unable to work or telework because they are caring for a child under 18 years of age whose school or place of care has been closed, or whose child care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19. Teammates employed at the State of Nebraska for at least 30 days are eligible for up to 12 weeks of expanded family and medical leave. The first 10 days may be unpaid. Teammates are not required to, but may choose to use other paid leave options during this time. After the first 10 days, teammates are eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave subject to the guidance and calculations contained in the act.

NEW 3.31.2020 **What do teammates qualify for under the expanded family and medical leave?**

- 12 weeks of leave (this is not in addition to FMLA – teammates are only eligible for 12 weeks of FMLA total during any one-year time period.
 - The first 10 days may be unpaid leave
 - Leave after 10 days will be paid at 2/3 of their regular rate of pay calculated by the number of hours they would have worked.
 - Maximum of \$200/day and \$10,000 aggregate

UPDATED 4.17.2020 **Can teammates substitute paid leave?**

- Teammates can substitute accrued vacation leave, compensatory time, or sick leave as appropriate for unpaid leave during the first 10 days of EFMLA for this event in accordance with State policies. Teammates may also use vacation leave or compensatory time as appropriate in conjunction with paid Expanded Family and Medical Leave during the up to 10 additional weeks of EFMLA.

NEW 3.31.2020 **Will teammates accrue vacation and sick leave while using this type of FMLA leave?**

- Teammates will accrue vacation and sick leave in the same manner they would if the teammate took FMLA leave for another qualifying reason.

Examples:

- If the teammate did not take any type of leave for the first ten days of FMLA leave for this qualifying reason, the teammate would not accrue any paid leave during those 10 days.
- If the teammate took vacation leave for those first ten days, the teammate would accrue paid leave.
- If the teammate is being paid 2/3 per day pursuant to the EFMLA, the teammate would accrue paid leave as normal.

NEW 4.17.2020 If a teammate is home caring for their child because his or her school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, will the teammate qualify for Paid Sick Leave, Expanded Family and Medical Leave, or both—how do they interact?

Teammates may be eligible for a variety of leave options depending on your circumstances, but only for a total of twelve weeks of paid leave. Teammates may be eligible to take both FFCRA Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Family and Medical Leave for their child whose school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons. The Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act provides for an initial two weeks of paid leave. This period thus covers the first ten workdays of expanded family and medical leave, which are otherwise unpaid under the Emergency and Family Medical Leave Expansion Act unless the teammate elects to use emergency paid sick leave, accrued vacation or sick leave, and/or compensatory time. After the first ten workdays have elapsed, teammates may choose any individual option or combination of options paid Expanded Family and Medical Leave (2/3 of regular rate of pay), vacation leave (full rate of pay) and/or compensatory time (full rate of pay) for the hours used caring for their child in the up to ten subsequent weeks under the Emergency and Family Medical Leave Expansion Act.

NEW 3.31.2020 How do these provisions impact teammates and ready to work status?

Prior to FFCRA becoming effective on 4/1/2020, ready to work status has been considered for the following teammate situations:

1. Not-Sick, at risk for serious illness from COVID-19, and no remote/telework available.
2. Not-Sick, caring for <18 child home due to a COVID-19 related closure, and no remote/telework available
3. Not-Sick, displaced from normal workplace due to Public Health Emergency, schedule change, and no remote/telework available

For option 1, agencies should ask these teammates to reach out to their health care professional and seek guidance. If their health care provider directs them to self-quarantine, then the appropriate FFCRA Paid Sick Leave option should be applied and the teammate removed from ready to work status. If their health care provider give other guidance, then available options should be applied appropriately.

For option 2, teammates should be moved from ready to work status to the appropriate FFCRA options. For options 3, teammates in these situations are not impacted by the FFCRA.

NEW 3.31.2020 **What records do I need to keep when my teammate takes paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?**

If one of your teammates takes paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act, you must require your teammate to provide you with appropriate documentation in support of the reason for the leave, including: the teammate's name, qualifying reason for requesting leave, statement that the teammate is unable to work, including telework, for that reason, and the date(s) for which leave is requested. Documentation of the reason for the leave will also be necessary, such as the source of any quarantine or isolation order, or the name of the health care provider who has advised you to self-quarantine. For example, this documentation may include a copy of the Federal, State or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 applicable to the teammate or written documentation by a health care provider advising the teammate to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19. If you intend to claim a tax credit under the FFCRA for your payment of the sick leave wages, you should retain this documentation in your records. You should consult Internal Revenue Service (IRS) applicable forms, instructions, and information for the procedures that must be followed to claim a tax credit, including any needed substantiation to be retained to support the credit.

If one of your teammates takes expanded family and medical leave to care for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19, under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act, you must require your teammate to provide you with appropriate documentation in support of such leave, just as you would for conventional FMLA leave requests. For example, this could include a notice that has been posted on a government, school, or day care website, or published in a newspaper, or an email from a teammate or official of the school, place of care, or child care provider. This requirement also applies when the first two weeks of unpaid leave run concurrently with paid sick leave taken for the same reason. If you intend to claim a tax credit under the FFCRA for the expanded family and medical leave, you should retain this documentation in your records. You should consult IRS applicable forms, instructions, and information for the procedures that must be followed to claim a tax credit, including any needed substantiation to be retained to support the credit.

NEW 3.31.2020 **What timeframe does the Families First Coronavirus Response Act cover?**

The leave provisions are in effective starting April 1, 2020 and will apply to leave taken between April 1 through December 31, 2020.

UPDATED 4.17.2020 **Does this cover part-time teammates or temporary teammates?**

Yes. Full, part-time, and temporary teammates are eligible for paid sick leave covered by the act, and if they have been employed at the State of Nebraska for at least 30 days they are eligible for expanded family and medical leave. The act does all certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. This list of critical positions may be expanded as the Governor deems necessary.

NEW 4.14.2020 **Are any State of Nebraska positions excluded from the FFCRA?**

The FFCRA does allow the exclusion of certain critical positions such as, but not limited to, health care workers and emergency responders. The Governor makes these determinations with the input and recommendations of agency leaders.

Agencies, that have positions they believe meet the criteria for exclusion need to contact Sean Davis, at sean.davis@nebraska.gov. Sean will provide additional details for properly identifying and submitting proposed excluded positions for approval.

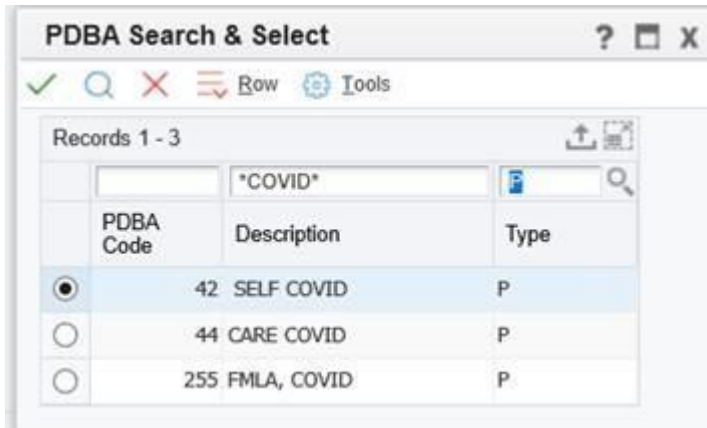
NEW 4.14.2020 **The sixth FFCRA qualifying reason is, “Teammate is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Department of Health and Human Services.” What does this mean?**

This “substantially similar condition” must be defined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor. It is a statement included to provide the flexibility to address unforeseen circumstances not already addressed in the FFCRA. The Secretary of Health and Human Services has not defined “substantially similar condition” yet.

NEW 4.14.2020 **Does time which qualifies for Expanded Family and Medical Leave Act (EFMLA) under the FFCRA have to be counted as part of the 12 total weeks of FMLA allowed per year, regardless of whether a teammate is using regular accrued leave and/or the FFCRA leave?**

Yes, teammates who qualify under the EFMLA act must count the time used for the EFMLA qualifying reason towards the allowed total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave per 12 month period. Expanded FML is not in addition to regular FMLA. Teammates are only eligible for 12 weeks of FMLA total during any one-year time period.

NEW 4.14.2020 **What are the pay types that can be used for the FFCRA leave options and which are applicable for each scenario?**



The screenshot shows a window titled "PDBA Search & Select" with a search bar containing "*COVID*". Below the search bar is a table with three columns: "PDBA Code", "Description", and "Type". The table contains three rows of results:

PDBA Code	Description	Type
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	42 SELF COVID	P
<input type="radio"/>	44 CARE COVID	P
<input type="radio"/>	255 FMLA, COVID	P

42 – Self COVID can be used for hours if:

1. Teammate is subject to federal/state/local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. Teammate is advised by health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19;
3. Teammate is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis;

44 – Care COVID can be used for hours if:

4. Teammate is caring for an individual subject to (1) or (2)
5. Teammate is caring for son/daughter if the school or place of care of the son/daughter has been closed or childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions (for the first 2 weeks up to 80 hours);
or
6. Teammate is experiencing “any other substantially similar condition” specified by the Department of Health and Human Services.

255 – FMLA, COVID can be used for hours of paid Expanded FMLA leave.

Expanded family and medical leave applies after the first two weeks up to an additional 10 weeks for teammates who are unable to work or telework because they are caring for a child under 18 years of age or 18 years of age or older who is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability whose school or place of care has been closed, or whose child care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions.

NEW 4.14.2020 **How should “caring for an individual subject” under FFCRA qualifying reason #4 be understood?**

The Department of Labor guidance says, the fourth reason for paid sick leave applies where a teammate is unable to work (or telework) because he or she needs to care for an individual who is either: (a) subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order; or (b) has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine based on a belief that he or she has COVID-19, may have COVID-19, or is particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. .

The teammate must have a genuine need to care for the individual. Accordingly, § 826.20(a)(5) explains that **paid sick leave may not be taken to care for someone with whom the teammate has no personal relationship**. Rather, the individual being cared for must be an immediate family member, a person who regularly resides in the teammate’s home (ex. roommate), or a similar person with whom the teammate has a relationship that creates an expectation that the teammate would care for the person if he or she self-quarantined or was quarantined.

NEW 4.14.2020 **Is it required for FFCRA qualifying teammates to use the Emergency Paid Sick Leave prior to using other allowed and available leave types?**

- It is the teammate’s choice to use Emergency Paid Sick Leave and/or other allowed and appropriate leave.

NEW 4.17.2020 **How should an agency track FFCRA Expanded Family and Medical Leave and Emergency Paid Sick Leave? Has the state developed a system?**

- Agencies’ current systems of tracking FMLA leave should be sufficient for tracking expanded FML under the FFCRA. FFCRA Paid Sick Leave balances will show in JDE. State Payroll can provide further guidance as needed.

NEW 4.14.2020 **Can Teammates take Paid Sick Leave (PSL) or Expanded Family and Medical Leave (EPSLA) Intermittently?**

Yes. Section 826.50 of the US DOL’s Temporary Rule describes intermittent leave use as it relates the FFCRA.

NEW 3.31.2020 **For additional FAQ’s questions concerning the Families First Coronavirus Response Act please visit the following resources available at the Department of Labor’s website:**

- [Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers](#)
- [COVID-19 and the Fair Labor Standards Act: Questions and Answers](#)
- [COVID-19 and the Family and Medical Leave Act: Questions and Answers](#)
- [Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights](#)
- [Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements](#)

What if I have traveled or live with someone who has traveled?

You should review the CDC's guidance on travel:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/travelers/index.html> and consult health care professionals to receive direction prior to returning to work. Follow the direction of health care professionals. Then apply the guidelines outlined above that fit your situation.

NEW 3.20.2020 Does my state insurance offer virtual visits?

Yes! Teledoc/Telehealth visits are part of the state's insurance plan. Visits are free for teammates on the Wellness and Regular health plans and are 20% after the deductible has been met for Consumer Focused Health Plan. For issues specifically related to the COVID-19 virus, the Consumer Focused High Deductible plan and the HD plans with the Direct Primary Care plans will have virtual visits available to our teammates for free as well.

NEW 4.14.2020 Can teammates change their dependent flexible spending account or use that money for other purposes other than child care?

At Open Enrollment each year, we enable our teammates to make choices for their deductions that will cover the year for daycare flex. COVID-19 closures of daycares, preschools, and schools are considered a qualifying events for Dependent Care FSA. As a result, qualifying teammates will be allowed to increase, decrease, or stop current deductions. If teammates would like to make changes to their current deduction, they should contact the Wellness and Benefits team (as.employeebenefits@nebraska.gov).

In May during Open Enrollment, teammates will again have the opportunity to make elections for the next plan year. At that time, teammates may also adjust their deductions for 2020-2021 as appropriate to their situation.

NEW 4.14.2020 Can teammates change their Medical flexible spending account or use that money for other purposes other than child care?

Due to the IRS regulations, while we understand that many elective medical, dental, and vision procedures are being disrupted, the inability to obtain services is not a qualifying event to change teammate elections. The Wellness and Benefit team is monitoring this situation, but there is no indication of an IRS change at this time.

Teammates may wish to consider alternatives for reimbursable expenses. The CARES Act, enacted last week, removed the prescription requirement for medical FSA purchases and is now allowing the purchase of over-the-counter drugs and medicines using teammates' FSA. This means things such as aspirin, allergy medications, pain relievers, menstrual care products, etc. are eligible to be purchased using your FSA.

To assist teammates with the changes, there is a list of covered items on [ASI's website](#) that we encourage teammates to utilize with their FSA money.

NEW 3.20.2020 **How do I access a virtual visit?**

To access a virtual visit please follow the instructions listed below:

- Log in to www.myuhc.com or the UHC App and click on Virtual Visits.
- Choose a provider group and click through to their website. Once you make that choice, you leave www.myuhc.com and go directly to their selected provider group's page. (Please note: Teledoc is accessible directly from myuhc.com landing page. AmWell and Doctors on Demand (DOD) are accessible via each respective app or website.)
- Register - Each virtual visit provider group will require you to register – similar to “in-person” visits to a brick-and mortar clinic. Registration typically includes providing the name of the patient, health insurance, pharmacy, and other general health information. There is no charge for COVID-19 specific virtual visits. Otherwise, you are required to pay at time of service. (WellNebraska and Regular Plan cover virtual visits at 100%)
- Request a Visit - Once registered, you will request a visit and move into a virtual waiting room.
- Connect to Physician - During your visit, you will be asked to describe your symptoms and health concerns.
- Diagnosis and Prescription - The treating physician will provide a diagnoses and likely ask about your primary care physician so any notes can be shared. The virtual visit physician will then create an integrated medical record with full documentation. You can access this record once the visit is complete so you can email it or print and bring it to your primary care physician. If required, the virtual visit doctor can write a prescription that is sent electronically to your chosen pharmacy, where you can pick it up.

NEW 3.20.2020 **Does my short term disability insurance cover COVID-19?**

Your short-term disability insurance may cover COVID-19 if:

- You are placed in a medically recommended quarantine or isolation without the ability to work. (You would need to file all appropriate claims and materials to apply.)

Or if:

- You are diagnosed with COVID-19 and are too ill to work. (You would need to file all appropriate claims and materials to apply.)

Your short-term disability insurance may **NOT** cover COVID-19 if:

- You are placed in a medically recommended quarantine or isolation but you are able (not ill) to work remotely.

The State of Nebraska has no authority on approving or denying any STD claim. That decision rests solely with UHC and the determination is made from the information that is received from the teammate, their HR partner (Employer) and the physician.

Additional Information:

- **NOTE:** Since the CDC has encouraged individuals to contact health care professionals remotely rather than physically going to a medical facility, requirements for a medical certificate documenting the illness may be waived. Beginning 03/01/2020, COVID-19 related [Virtual Visits](#) are available at no charge if you participate in a state medical plan.
- **My Health:** You can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 using social distancing and good hygiene. Teammates who are ill should stay home. Teammates who come to work showing symptoms of being ill will be sent home. Helpful resources are provided at the [DHHS COVID-19 site](#).
- **UPDATED 3.25.2020 My Self Care:** Helpful resources to help manage anxiety and stress are available on the [CDC website](#) or through the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP)
- **My Workplace:** For COVID-19 workplace issues, critical communication and guidance will be coordinated through the Public Health Office appropriately with agency leadership and those who are affected.
- **My Medical Insurance:** Normally if you are in an unpaid status for 14 consecutive days your health insurance would cease at the end of that month. There are special COVID-19 provisions now in place so that if your circumstances would result in an unpaid status for 14 consecutive days directly due to COVID19, your health insurance would continue uninterrupted as long as you continue to pay your premiums.
- **My Coverage for COVID-19 Tests/Medical Visits:** As of 3/1/2020 COVID-19 diagnostic testing and the testing kits are covered at 100% (no members cost share) and this applies to all plans. Office visits and/or hospitalization will be covered by state insurance with the appropriate co-pays and deductibles as it relates to the plan the teammate is currently on.
- **My Prescriptions:** Optum Rx through United HealthCare, our pharmacy vendor, will be allowing teammates to refill their prescription early. Teammates will need to contact their pharmacy or call the phone number listed on the back of the UHC card for assistance.

Other Guidance:

- **UPDATED 4.17.2020 Work Options** - Agencies are encouraged to be as flexible as possible to provide telework, remote work, and ready to work status options to teammates as needs may dictate. The intent is to limit, as much as possible, any negative impact to our teammates' compensation due to the implications of COVID-19.
 - Telework: Agency leadership and/or human resources should review the [Telecommuting Guidelines](#) on the State Personnel website. This guide provides information related to recording hours worked, IT equipment, safety, worker's compensation, and confidentiality issues. The normal process may be adjusted/waived as needed to expedite telework options for teammates not currently in a telecommuting agreement. A model Telecommuting Agreement will be available on the State Personnel COVID-19 Resources page.
 - Remote Work: If full telework options are not available, meaningful and productive remote work may be an option, such as email communications, project work, policy & procedures work, relevant training, etc. Tips related to meaningful and productive remote work will be available on the State Personnel COVID-19 Resources page.

- **UPDATED 4.1.2020** Ready to Work: In the event that normal workplaces may have to adjust operating hours, limit access, or temporarily close; teammates who don't have the option of telework or remote work, but are otherwise able to work, may be placed in a paid ready to work status as appropriate and approved by the State Personnel Director. The ready to work process will be expedited as needed to prevent any interruption in teammate pay. Temporary teammates are eligible for ready to work status as described above. A guidance document and ready to work form will be available on the State Personnel COVID-19 Resources page.

Additional Guidance for Alternative Work Options

Agencies are encouraged to be as flexible as possible in providing remote options to work for teammates as the needs for increased social distancing may develop. Agencies should assess their IT resources to support alternative work options for teammates performing essential functions and prepare accordingly.

Depending on the position, many teammates have the ability to perform the majority of their work functions remotely utilizing laptops and VPN access. A model Telecommuting Agreement will be available on the State Personnel COVID-19 Resources page.

Additionally, most teammates can access their email through remote email using personal devices. Agencies have the option of remote work for teammates who may have limited telework options. Examples include training, project work, and other administrative and clerical work.

What about teammates coming to work sick? What symptoms are of concern?

Teammates who come to work showing symptoms of being ill will be sent home as they could be endangering the health of other teammates regardless of whether they may be exhibiting specific symptoms of COVID-19. The [DHHS website](#) provides up to date information on symptoms of COVID-19 and guidance for those who have traveled to an at-risk country, been potentially exposed, or are sick. The general guidance from public health is to err on the side of safety. So, if someone is coughing, running a fever, and/or experiencing other respiratory issues, such as shortness of breath, they are to stay home and contact their local public health office. The contact information for local public health offices is available on the [DHHS Disease Reporting](#) webpage.

What if a teammate believes that they were potentially exposed to COVID-19?

Teammates should contact their public health office before returning to work. The contact information for local public health offices is available on the [DHHS Disease Reporting](#) webpage. The public health office will provide guidance for the teammate. The general guidance from public health is to err on the side of safety. Public Health is discouraging action that would take up capacity of our health care systems that need to be used for critical COVID-19 issues. Currently there is no requirement for a doctor's note to return to work. Anybody that comes to work and appears to be ill should be sent home.

Are doctor's notes necessary?

A major COVID-19 concern relates to overwhelming the capacity of our healthcare systems. Agencies can help prevent this by adjusting processes that might normally require a doctor's note and using a good faith approach.

When should teammates who can perform their job remotely begin to do so?

At this time there is no hard and fast rule. Agency leaders should use discretion appropriately. Guidance may change with the ever evolving COVID-19 situation and need for social distancing.

Under what circumstances will agencies communicate to their teammates (and externally) that there is a confirmed case among one or more of our teammates?

The timing and content of all critical communication and guidance will be coordinated through the Public Health Office and the Governor's Office appropriately to agency leadership and those who may have been affected.

Under what conditions would workers compensation apply?

There are no changes to the conditions for workers compensation specific to COVID-19. Current guidance is still applicable.

Are there specific COVID-19 guidelines for SOS Temporary Teammates?

Temporary teammates should follow the policy and guidance of their respective agencies.

What are the provisions around allowing a teammate to keep their insurance coverage even if they're out unpaid for 14 or more days? Is it FMLA or is there something more?

Normally if a teammate is in an unpaid status for 14 consecutive days their health insurance would cease at the end of that month. There are special provisions now in place so that if a teammate's circumstances would result in an unpaid status for 14 consecutive days directly due to COVID-19 related circumstances, their health insurance would continue uninterrupted by the agency continuing to pay the State's part of the premiums and the teammate continuing to pay their premiums by the 1st of the following month.

- If the leave is 14 calendar days or less, the medical coverage continues.
- If the leave is greater than 14 calendar days, coverage ends on the last day of the month following 14 days of continuous leave.
- If the teammate is in a leave without pay status due to COVID-19, then the 14 day rule would be suspended.

The teammate must submit payment (their portion of the premium) for the full month to the agency by the 1st of the following month in order for their medical benefits to continue. If the payment is not received, then their plan would end effective the last day of the prior month.