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**Kenneth J. Zellers**  
Acting Commissioner

**To: All State Departmental Employees**

**From: Kenneth J. Zellers**

**Date: January 3, 2022**

**Re: Leave guidance related to Coronavirus Disease 19 (Version 9)**  
*(Superseding all previous versions.)*

To minimize the spread of illness during the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) outbreak, we are asking all team members (including supervisors) to be flexible, consistent with this Guidance, regarding leave for team members who are or may be sick.

This Version updates isolation requirements for team members who test positive for COVID-19 (section 3) and removes quarantine requirements for team members who have had close contact with a person infected with COVID-19 (section 5), concludes the ability for team members to perform work from home if those individuals are not approved to do so as part of the State distributed work program, removes quarantine requirements for international and cruise ship travel (sections 7 and 8) and provides additional guidance to team members returning from travel, and eliminates the guidance for office suites or state building closures.

**1. Team members who are or may be sick.** Influenza and other respiratory infections including COVID-19 have similar if not identical signs and symptoms. Team members who feel sick or who develop COVID-19 symptoms as discussed in this paragraph should take their temperature twice a day to accurately track their temperature and call their physician. A team member who is sick should NOT report to work. “Sick” in this context means the team member has a fever at or above 100.4° F; or unexplained body aches, headache, or sore throat; or chills, new loss of taste or smell, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. If a team member is sick, the team member should not return to the workplace until after their fever has reduced below this level for 24 hours after they have stopped taking fever reducing medicines, the COVID-19 symptoms they experienced have improved, and at least five calendar days have passed since the team member’s symptoms first appeared (your healthcare professional may extend this five day period in instances of severe illness). The team member should use their available leave so that the team member

can recover and does not cause others to become sick. A team member does not need to be seeking a medical diagnosis before this provision applies.

**2. Team members with pending COVID-19 test results.** A team member who has been tested for COVID-19 because they are sick should not report to the workplace while results are pending. In this circumstance, team members should use their available leave.

**3. Team members who test positive for COVID-19.** A team member who tests positive for COVID-19 cannot return to the workplace until (1) they have isolated for five days; (2) their symptoms, if any, are resolving; AND (3) they do not have a fever without the use of fever-reducing medication. Upon returning to the office, the team member is encouraged to use daily mitigation strategies for an additional five days. Mitigation strategies include but are not limited to mask use, social distancing, hand and cough hygiene and avoiding crowds. Team members should use their available leave if they are unable to return to the workplace.

Direct care staff, as determined by your departments, at state institutions should receive guidance from their respective departments about returning to the workplace following a positive COVID-19 test.

**4. Team members who test negative for COVID-19.** A team member with COVID-19 symptoms who tests negative for COVID-19 cannot return to the workplace until any fever has reduced below 100.4° F for 24 hours after they have stopped taking fever-reducing medicines and any other symptoms have improved. In this circumstance, team members should use their available leave.

**5. Team members who have had close contact with an infected person.** A team member may feel well but may have had close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. Close contact is defined as being within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic infected persons, two days prior to their test specimen collection) until the time the infected person is isolated. If a team member has had close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 the team member is not required to quarantine however the team member is encouraged to use mitigation strategies for 10 calendar days and should self-monitor for symptoms for 10 calendar days after the close contact, and if symptoms develop, isolate, get tested, and follow the instructions in categories 1-4 above.

If the team member's close contact was with a spouse, child, other relative or household member requiring the team member's personal care and attention, the team member may use sick leave.

**6. School, daycare, and similar closings due to COVID-19.** In the event of school, daycare, or adult care closings due to COVID-19, a team member may need to be home with their children or their adult child or parent for whom they need to provide care. In such circumstances, the team member should use their available annual leave or comp time.

In the alternative, supervisors should authorize the following options where viable and consistent with necessary business operations:

- a. *Expand work hours or allow flexible schedules.* For example, allow early morning, evening, and/or weekend work so that team members can care for their children or parents during the day but work in the evenings when a spouse can be home to care for the children or parents.
- b. *Allow job-sharing or job-splitting.* For example, team members who do the same type of job could split the day – one of them could work the first four hours and the other could work the second four hours, thus reducing the amount of leave that each must take.

**7. Leave upon returning from travel.** Team members returning from travel are not required to self-quarantine but are encouraged to use mitigation strategies and should self-monitor for symptoms for 10 days after returning, and if symptoms develop, isolate, get tested, and follow the instructions in categories 1-4 above.

**8. Questions.** Questions regarding this memo should be addressed to your agency's HR staff. We will issue additional or different guidance or directives as may become necessary.