

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

FAQ's

July 2020

Unity Healthcare's main priority is the health and safety of patients, staff, and physicians. We understand this pandemic is causing stress - not only here at work, but for each of you at home and for the community, country and world at-large. In an effort to share information as we know it, we are providing clarification to a few of the common questions we have received.

- 1. ARE COVID-19 AND CORONAVIRUS THE SAME THING?** No, coronavirus is the generic term (e.g. "Facial Tissue") and COVID-19 is the specific type of coronavirus causing the pandemic today (e.g. "Kleenex").
- 2. PREVENT THE SPREAD:** Each member of the Unity team should practice the basic wellness steps listed below to help reduce the spread of infection:
 - Wash hands for at least 20 seconds
 - Cover cough and sneezes with elbow
 - Minimize contact with eyes, nose and mouth without first washing hands
 - Stay home if you are sick. (see #11 for details)
 - Practice social distancing – maintain distances of approximately six (6) feet if possible
 - Avoid shaking hands or other physical contact with others
 - Wear a facemask or cloth face covering depending on your interaction with patients &/or the setting you are in.
- 3. UNITY ACCESS:** Updated Monday, July 20, 2020, no more than one (1) non-symptomatic visitor may accompany the patient. All other visitors must remain outside the building



(remain in the car). Some practices have chosen to allow no visitors to accompany the patient and are communicating this via signs, phone calls, and other postings.

4. All Unity Employees are to have their temperatures taken upon coming into work until further notice. **If an employee has a temperature of 100 or >, they will be sent home,** and their supervisor notified.
5. **HR POLICIES:** In general, all of Unity's policies remain in full force and effect unless specifically outlined below. Please continue monitoring your email for changes as they occur, along with the RAVE system alerts and the Unity Coronavirus website, www.unityhc.com/corona.
6. **PAYMENT FOR TIME OFF:** If I am unable to work due to being quarantined for any reason (personal illness, a family member is sick or direct exposure to COVID-19, or to care for a child due to a school furlough/e-learning, low patient census, etc.):

A. **Will I be paid?**

Any time away from work related to the COVID-19 virus will be paid to the extent you have accrued PTO, or any short-term disability (STD) benefit you may have purchased if you meet eligibility requirements.



B. **Do I have to use PTO?**

Accrued PTO must be used for a minimum of 50% of any COVID-related absence. Employees have the choice whether the other 50% is paid using accrued PTO or unpaid leave.

Example: An employee has 30 hours of accrued PTO and is absent from work due to COVID-19 for 30 hours. Under the current PTO policy, the employee would be obligated to use all 30 hours of the employee's accrued PTO for the absences. However, under the temporary policy, the employee would be required to use at least 15 hours of PTO but has the choice of whether to take the additional 15 hours as PTO or unpaid.

C. **Will my job be protected by Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for time out of the office?**

FMLA protects the job of an employee, who misses work due to a 'serious health condition' as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor, requiring the absence of three or more days, or treatment involving two or more doctor visits within 30 days of the start of the incapacity. As many reasons for potential absences related to COVID-19 will not constitute a 'serious health condition', FMLA may not apply in most instances. However, Unity values its workforce and

intends to be flexible with virus-related absences and job security except in the case of egregious misuse.

D. Can I use my Extended Sick Bank (ESB) hours for time out of the office?

Yes, to the extent the leave is related to an FMLA-qualifying event, and up to 40 hours of accrued PTO is used first, as outlined in the current policy.

E. Does it qualify as short-term disability if I have short-term disability coverage?

Potentially, if an individual is unable to work due to personal illness, which is substantiated with the appropriate documentation from a physician.

F. Will I be required to take a leave of absence?

Yes, if you are symptomatic (temperature > 100°F or a subjective feeling of being 'feverish' with a cough or shortness of breath) you will be required to stay home for a period of at least **ten (10) days**, and

- At least 24 hours have passed *since last* fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

As explained above, you may limit the amount of PTO you must use during this absence by using at least 50% of your accrued PTO and the remainder of your absence can be unpaid if you choose.

If you are asymptomatic and have had no direct exposure to the virus, you may continue to work while monitoring yourself and immediately informing your supervisor and personal physician if symptoms arise. If you have had direct exposure to COVID-19, contact your supervisor. The supervisor will then contact Margie Crooks at 765-446-5237 or another designated administrative contact to begin the risk assessment process.

7. Does Workers' Compensation apply to absences related to COVID-19?

It is not expected that workers' compensation would apply as an employee's exposure risk is substantial outside the employment relationship. This was confirmed by Unity's Workers' Compensation insurance carrier, which stated that an employee claiming WC would need to prove the exposure occurred at work.



8. Can I work from home?

In our desire to 'stop the spread' of this virus, all positions are being evaluated for eligibility to work remotely. However, not all job functions can be done efficiently from a remote location. To determine if your position can be performed remotely, please contact your Office Administrator/Supervisor about this option. Unity reserves the right to modify any decision about where the work may be performed at any

time.

9. If we have confirmed cases in our organization, am I expected to come to work? Do I have to work in the area of a patient diagnosed with or suspected to have COVID-19?

Yes, it is our ethical duty as staff and physicians to serve and treat patients while wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) in order to keep the patients and ourselves safe.

Given the prevalence of COVID-19, it should be anticipated that a patient coming to Unity for healthcare services may unknowingly carry the virus. Therefore, Unity is committed to protecting our workforce through diligent screenings and the wearing of the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) during patient contact and interaction in order to keep ourselves and our patients safe.

10. If I'm absent due to COVID-19, am I subject to Unity's Attendance policy, including discipline for more than six (6) absences?

Yes. Currently, COVID-19 related absences will not count as an occurrence for disciplinary reasons, unless there is abuse of the temporary policy present. Follow your normal call-in/attendance policy, when communicating absences to your supervisor.

11. When should I self-quarantine and when can I return to work?

We will follow CDC guidelines as well as any state mandates. Currently, we are implementing Protocols that will help determine case by case the actions to take.

- However, if you are symptomatic with a fever $>100^{\circ}$ F and
 - A cough and/or shortness of breath, or
 - Chills, or
 - Muscle pain, or
 - Headache, or
 - Sore throat, or
 - New loss of taste or smell

Please stay home and contact your supervisor.

The CDC has a Coronavirus self-checker to help you know when and what type of medical care to seek: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

You can leave home after these three things have happened:

- You have had no fever for at least 24 hours (no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
AND
- other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)
AND
- at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

Updated July 17, 2020 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html>

12. I think I might have COVID-19 or may have been exposed. Should I be tested?

Access to COVID-19 testing has been a source of concern which is improving the longer the pandemic continues. Prior to availability of tests, we relied on isolation with the onset of symptoms and seeking medical care when or if the respiratory symptoms became critical.

Please follow our risk assessment protocols. The employee will need to contact their supervisor. The supervisor will then contact Margie Crooks at 765-446-5237 or another designated administrative contact to begin the risk assessment process.

13. I work in patient care and have had an exposure, what do I do?

The employee will need to contact their supervisor. The supervisor will then contact Margie Crooks at 765-446-5237 or another designated administrative contact to begin the risk assessment process.



14. Do I need a 'Return to Work Verification' if I have been away from work due to having COVID-19, or self-quarantining?

If you have had COVID-19, or are suspected of having it, you will need to obtain a return to work verification from Unity Immediate Care (UICC). They are open 7 days/week (5/14/2020 update).

If you have any additional questions, please reach out to your
COA Supervisor of the
Human Resources Department Central Line at (765) 446-5272.

