

Please Read - COVID-19 Update & Its Impact on Our Workplace

Good morning, everyone.

The purpose of this email is to touch base, provide a COVID-19 update and let all of you know how this pandemic is impacting our team.

The positive test rate for COVID-19 is currently hovering over 6.0%. To shed some light on that number, the last peak we had in June was 2.5%. Kettering Health Network has indicated that, due to the demand for nurses in response to the rise in cases, health care staffing has increased to pre-COVID levels. We are thankful that the treatment methods have reduced the severity of the outcomes, but the dramatic increase in hospitalizations is troubling at best. As an organization, we need to stay focused, vigilant and hold each other accountable in following the protocols we have in place for our protection. We have had employees who have been exposed to COVID-19, as well as those who have contracted it. As the pandemic forces its way toward us, we need to fight it by standing strong and using every precaution we have in place. Some incidents in our organization could have been avoided by following the protocols put in place during the onset of the pandemic back in March.

For those of you who have done your due diligence to protect yourselves and your coworkers, thank you. Most of our employees have worked tirelessly to keep our work areas and coworkers safe by incorporating masks, distance, sanitization and taking the extra steps necessary to keep COVID-19 at bay. As we well know, it only takes one incident to unleash the power of the pandemic. By following the protocols we have in place, we can help stop it from spreading.

The isolation factor the pandemic breeds is sometimes unbearable. Even so, it is imperative that we stay in our own workspaces as much as possible. We need to stop having meals together unless we are able to maintain 6 feet of distance from those sitting near us. While eating, our masks are removed which is also not an ideal situation for optimal safety. For a social break, mask up and stand as far apart (6 feet minimum) as possible to chat, or go outside for a socially-distanced walk.

Another issue many of you are experiencing is mask fatigue. We need to weather the storm and make the most of it and the protection it garners. It's difficult. And, as the weather gets colder, we will be inside more. The numbers around us will continue to rise; but, we can work together to protect our coworkers and our families as much as we can. We are protecting each other as we would in any situation. Our kids, along with school kids across the nation, are wearing masks all day--every day. If nothing else, let's wear ours to show support for them.

If you are sick and/or have even one COVID-19 symptom—including during your days off--please stay home, contact your supervisor and work through the City's protocol with Human Resources. Reporting to your supervisor and working with HR to determine if you are cleared to come to work is important to avoid putting your coworkers at risk. If you feel fine but worry you may have been exposed to COVID-19 or if someone in your household has been exposed and is in quarantine, please contact your supervisor and HR as outlined in the City's protocol to determine next steps. Achieving a task in the office is not worth putting your coworkers at risk. If you have any questions or concerns whatsoever, please contact your supervisor or HR. Supervisors, I encourage you to contact HR when in doubt about protocols in place. It is new territory, and there is a lot of information to remember and decipher.

In our arsenal, we have policies, protocols and common sense. Please use these tools and help everyone remain accountable. If you see something, say something. Wearing a mask and maintaining 6-foot distance work hand-in-hand and are ineffective unless working in tandem. If you need to get closer than 6 feet, be cognizant of the 15-minute maximum time allotment recommended for safety. We have learned that the 15-minute rule is now cumulative. So, if you spend multiple periods throughout the day closer than 6 feet with one individual, you are putting one another at risk.

Try to conduct all business via telephone or video conference. Limit personal interactions whenever possible. We need to be here in our workspaces, but we must conduct business in a safe manner while doing so.

Use caution and make smart choices. It's going to take a team approach for us to emerge from this pandemic through common sense, enforcement and holding people accountable. A flier listing the things you need to know to maintain a safe workspace is attached to this email. If you need more detailed City protocol information, please do not hesitate to ask your supervisor or Department Director. COVID-19-related documents can be found on the City's shared "K" drive in the COVID-19 folder, as well as on our website at <https://www.ketteringoh.org/employee-updates-information-covid-19/>.

You are all incredibly valuable to our team, and I realize you have inordinate stressors in your personal lives, as well. I will continue to do whatever needs to be done to help ensure good health and safety. And, I'm asking you to join me in safely moving through this.

I'm here. Your supervisors are here. Whatever you need, please never hesitate to contact us. We are in this together.

Thank you for your service to the community and to each other.

Mark

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