Maintaining Operations Checklist*

Health care workers are often on the front lines in encountering exposure to respiratory illnesses such as the coronavirus. In developing a preparedness plan, health care providers should consider the following personnel-related issues.

- Has the health care provider designated a preparedness coordinator who has responsibility for planning and responding to an outbreak from the employment perspective? Is the coordinator familiar with CDC’s guidelines for health care personnel with potential exposure?

- Has a formal written preparedness plan been established that addresses workforce and staffing issues during a coronavirus outbreak?

- Does the plan address the means to attain and maintain maximum productivity, services, and patient care, including identification of, and delegation to, key personnel in executing the plan?

- Once the plan is developed, will periodic education and training of the line employees, supervisors, administration, and members of the medical staff be conducted?

- Has the organization’s human resources department reviewed (and, if necessary, revised or supplemented) the following employment policies, among others: Americans with Disabilities Act and Special Needs Accommodation; Attendance and tardiness; Cross-training; Electronic communications; Employee health and hygiene; Fair Labor Standards Act Exempt Status; Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA); Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) (as pertains to employees); Hours of work; Emergent modification or suspension of standard leave policies, including accounting for employees who have minimal accrued leave but cannot or are advised not to report to work; On-call, call-in, and related communications; Overtime; Personal leave and absence; Sick leave; Short-term disability and long-term disability coverage; Telecommuting and remote work; Work shifts and shift rotation?

- Has the health care provider established policies to minimize the opportunities for transmission of the virus through work-related activities?

- Has the health care provider made provisions for emergency emotional, spiritual, psychological, and potentially psychiatric support to its employees who are dealing with anxiety caused by the outbreak?

- Does the health care provider offer on-site “housing” for employees and contingent staff for prolonged periods?

- Does the provider have appropriate policies in place governing employee vaccination should a vaccine become available?

*Adapted from the Community Pan-Flu Preparedness: A Checklist of Key Legal Issues for Health Care Providers (2015). © 2020 American Health Lawyers Association. All rights reserved.