

COVID-19 Guidance to Staff

Over recent days we have experienced dramatic changes in our routine due to the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. This has understandably raised questions regarding the health and safety of our staff and their loved ones. DCFS is working closely with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), as well as other state agencies experienced at responding to infectious disease outbreaks. In partnership, we are working to safeguard our employees while still ensuring we can continue to protect vulnerable children and strengthen families in crisis.

We all have a role to play when it comes to preventing the spread of COVID-19. It is vitally important that we follow every precaution to limit the spread of this virus. However, we must make fact-based decisions and follow the guidelines of the CDC and local health authorities to keep our organization operational. While some staff will be able to continue their work remotely at home, other roles require on-site work and face-to-face interactions with clients and the community. To answer questions regarding who is safe to come to work and who should stay home, please see the following guidelines.

Who must stay home?

Employees with Symptoms of Illness

Now, more than ever, sick employees should stay home. The CDC currently advises:

Employees who have symptoms of fever, cough or trouble breathing should not come to work until 7 days from the start of symptoms (if multiple symptoms, then from start of cough) and they are free of fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater using an oral thermometer) for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Due to the limited availability of test kits for COVID-19, most people who develop mild symptoms consistent with coronavirus (fever, cough) who do not meet risk criteria for COVID-19 exposure will not qualify for testing. These individuals should therefore follow the above criteria regarding return to work and other community interaction.

Close Contact to a Person with Lab-Test Proven COVID-19

Close contact is defined as:

a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case

– or –

b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

Close contacts of patients with proven COVID-19 will require 14 days of quarantine from the date of last exposure to the infected individual, under the guidance of local health officials.

Travel to Areas with Widespread Coronavirus

If an employee has traveled to an area with widespread coronavirus as identified by the CDC, they must quarantine at home for 14 days before returning to work.

Who does NOT need to stay home?

Contacts of People Exposed to COVID-19 Who Have Not Developed Symptoms of Illness

The CDC does not recommend testing, symptom monitoring or special management for people exposed to healthy individuals with potential exposures to COVID-19 (such as in a household), i.e., “contacts of contacts;” these people are not considered exposed to Coronavirus.

I will continue to work with the leadership at DCFS to address this evolving health crisis. Please feel free to reach out to me with questions or concerns.

Thanks for all you do - I am so proud to be working with such a dedicated, hard working group of people committed to serving Illinois' most vulnerable youth.

Sincerely,

Margaret Scotellaro, MD
Medical Director, IL DCFS

###