

**March 9, 2020**

**Subject: Coronavirus and Flu Prevention**

To All Physicians, PA/NPs, and Employees:

The world health community continues to monitor closely the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the disease it causes, named “coronavirus disease 2019” (COVID-19). At this time, no one knows how severe this outbreak will be. Given this uncertainty, and the fact that the seasonal influenza (flu) virus is also widespread, we are taking proactive steps to address a number of business concerns. First and foremost, we want to maintain a safe workplace and encourage and/or adopt practices protecting the health of employees, patients, visitors or others. We also want to ensure the continuity of clinical and support services operations in the event of a pandemic.

We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in the workplace. In addition to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak, it also is cold and flu season. To stay as healthy as possible, please remember to take the basic protective measures:

1. **Wash your hands frequently.** Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. **Maintain social distancing.** Maintain at least three feet distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
3. **Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.** Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose, or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and make you sick.
4. **Practice respiratory hygiene.** Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the tissue immediately and wash your hands afterward.
5. **If you have fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.** Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention with your primary care provider or urgent care center.

Forefront will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Cleaning sprays and wipes will also be provided to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards. For clinical staff, your physician leadership and regional team will be providing you additional information on personal protective equipment (PPE) and other preventative measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

It is critical that employees do not report to work while they are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that employees remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. We provide Paid Time Off (PTO) and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. Employees may use their PTO or go unpaid if they present with the symptoms noted above. **Employees reporting to work ill who are presenting symptoms will be sent home in accordance with CDC health guidelines dependent upon severity.** An employee may return to work in accordance with CDC guidelines above or by producing a return to work slip from their physician. For those employees covered under the Forefront health plan, your plan will cover the care you get if you're diagnosed as

having COVID-19. It'll also waive your out-of-pocket expenses for the focused test used to diagnose COVID-19 when medically necessary/ordered by a physician. You can call the number on the back of your identification card to confirm coverage.

Further, Forefront encourages you to indefinitely postpone travel to destinations on the CDC's Warning Lists. If you have **any** international travel planned, you must contact Compliance ([compliance@forefrontderm.com](mailto:compliance@forefrontderm.com)) or Human Resources ([hr@forefrontderm.com](mailto:hr@forefrontderm.com)) in advance of your travel. They will consult with Forefront management to determine the appropriate course of action upon your return.

If you travel to a Warning Level 3 destination (currently, China, Iran, Italy and South Korea), Forefront will adhere to the CDC's recommendations on isolation periods. If you are asymptomatic, you will be expected to work from home, if possible. Please contact Compliance or Human Resources with questions.

As a preventative measure, all non-essential work travel will be postponed. Please consult with your manager if you had work travel plans scheduled for further guidance.

Forefront will monitor the CDC's travel warnings, linked [here](#) for your reference, to determine if there are any changes to the Warning level 3 list.

If you or a family member at home becomes sick with COVID-19 (Coronavirus), you must notify your Supervisor and/or Human Resources immediately and refer to CDC [guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of your potential exposure](#). Our leave policies, such as Family and Medical Leave (FMLA), may be applicable during this time as well.

Employees are encouraged to use telephone and video conferencing instead of face-to-face meetings as much as possible during this outbreak. IT support services are available to employees who need assistance with this technology.

Forefront will consider, on a case-by-case basis, requests from employees to work from home during this time. While not all positions are conducive to telework, those positions with primary job duties that can be effectively performed remotely will be given consideration with your manager.

Please contact your manager or the human resources department at [hr@forefrontderm.com](mailto:hr@forefrontderm.com) with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Betsy Wernli