

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

JOEL BLANCHARD, MD, FACEP

OBJECTIVES:

- What is COVID-19?
- What is COVID-19's effect on companies?
- Are federal regulations relaxing?
- What can companies do to help?
- How should I direct sick employees?

SITUATION: THE FACTS

What is a COVID-19?

- Human coronaviruses are a family of viruses that typically cause the common cold
- Coronaviruses are typically seasonal. Like influenza, they circulate in fall and winter
- Like the annual influenza virus, some people become sick enough to be hospitalized and some may die
- This outbreak started in China, but has now spread throughout the world, including the US.

SITUATION: THE FACTS

What is a pandemic?

- Global outbreak of a disease
- Occurs when a new virus emerges to infect people and spreads between people sustainably
- The virus spreads world-wide because no one has pre-existing immunity

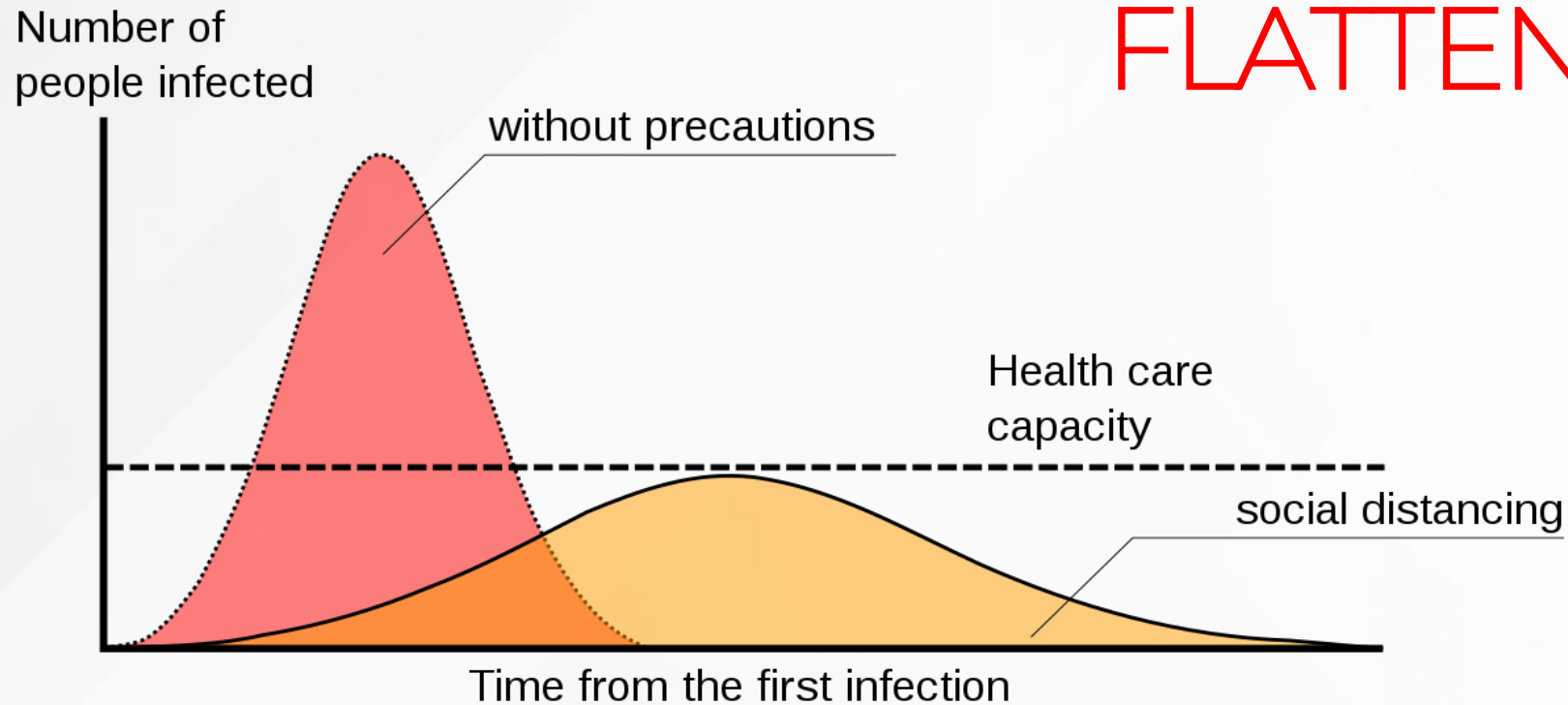
Why is COVID-19 spreading so quickly and why is it dangerous?

- Most respiratory viruses affect the upper part of the respiratory system **OR** the lower part of the respiratory system
- COVID-19 affects both
- Upper respiratory illness spread easily and are usually not serious (colds)
- Lower respiratory illness don't spread easily and are usually serious (pneumonia)

SITUATION: THE FACTS

- More people will get the virus, but taking precautions today helps prevent a massive spike in cases, ensuring we have the capacity to care for our communities.

FLATTEN THE CURVE



SITUATION: SYMPTOMS

What are symptoms of COVID-19?

- Fever
- Dry Cough
- Shortness of breath

Who does COVID-19 affect?

- The older you are the more serious the infection
- Vast majority of those infected have mild symptoms
- People who have chronic medical conditions (heart disease, diabetes, lung disease)
- Global mortality rates are higher than seasonal influenza

SITUATION: HOW IT SPREADS

How does the virus spread?

- The virus is spread mainly from person-to-person:
 - Close contact (within about 6 feet)
 - Via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes
 - Droplets can land in mouths, noses or be inhaled into the lungs
- The virus can also spread by contact with infected surfaces or objects
- Practice social distancing



ASSESSMENT: HAVE SYMPTOMS? STAY HOME.

If you have symptoms and/or have been exposed to the virus:

- Stay home rather than go to the doctor's office and risk spreading the virus to other people.
- Call your doctor's office **before** you go in for an appointment to report:
 - Your symptoms
 - Recent travels
 - Possible exposures

RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW TO STAY HEALTHY

How can I prevent getting coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- Stay at home if you are sick with a fever in the last 24 hours.
- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect objects you touch frequently and surfaces with a regular household cleaner.
- Follow the recommended protection procedures when caring for patients who have the virus.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TREATMENT

What is the treatment for coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for coronavirus (COVID-19).
- People with the virus should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms.
 - For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

EFFECT ON COMPANIES:

- Expect increased worker absenteeism
 - School closure
 - Ill workers
 - Ill family members needing care
- Expect change in commerce pattern
 - Shoppers at unusual hours to avoid contact with illness
- Expect interruption of supply and delivery
 - Hoarding
- Lack of supplies due to increased demand of needed medical supplies
- Companies supply chain interrupted with lack of workers

FEDERAL REGULATIONS:

Federal emergency declaration

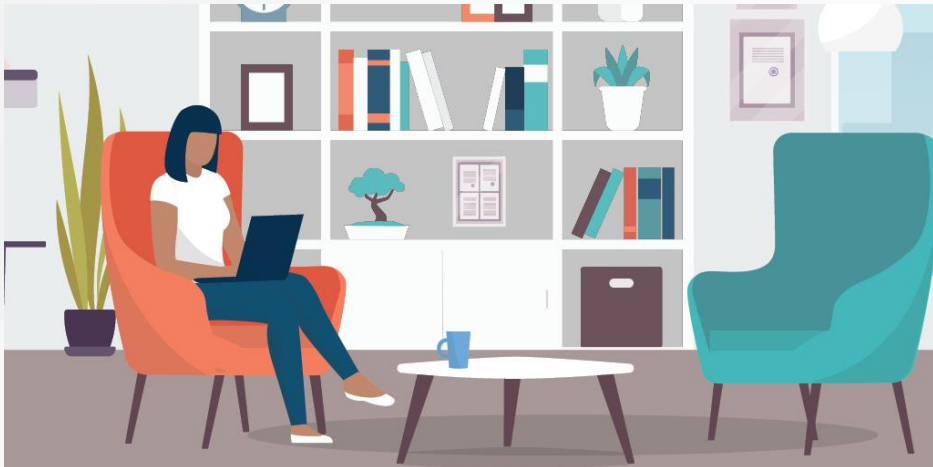
- Annual FIT testing suspended for health care workers
- Spirometry for employment exams suspended
- DOT drivers are given exemptions if providing transportation of supplies to deal with the pandemic
- DOT drivers: FMCSA has waived the requirement that drivers have a medical examination and certification
 - Must have proof of a valid certification that was issued for a period of 90 days or longer and expired on or after March 1, 2020.
 - The waiver is from March 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020.
- DOT drug testing requirements are still in place
 - Pre-hire DOT drivers require a negative drug screen before any safety-sensitive work.

CALL TO ACTION: COMPANY POLICIES

- Have sick employees stay home
- Reevaluate your policy regarding sick notes
 - Sick note requests overwhelm clinics who need to treat ill individuals
 - Visiting the clinic does not align with social distancing recommendations
- Don't require COVID-19 testing
 - Shortage of testing supplies
 - Must meet qualifications to receive testing
 - A negative COVID-19 test doesn't have guarantees

CALL TO ACTION: EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

- Don't send employees to high-risk regions for work
- Do not request a return-to-work exam for travelers to high-risk areas as this does not screen for COVID-19
- Send travelers home to self-quarantine for 14 days



CALL TO ACTION: EMPLOYEE SICK AT WORK

- Send the sick employee home immediately
- Advise employees to call their primary care provider for further instructions
- Do not require COVID-19 testing for all sick employees
- Advise co-workers that significant contact means spending at least 2 minutes within 6 feet of the individual

CALL TO ACTION: RETURN TO WORK

- A sick employee without a connection to COVID-19 may consider returning to work after 3 fever-free days have passed without the use of fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol **AND**
- There is improvement in their respiratory symptoms such as less cough and improved shortness of breath **AND**
- At least 7 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared, and symptoms have not worsened or expanded

Employees in contact with others with COVID-19 or who have travelled to high risk areas /cruise ships, need a 14 day self-quarantine.

CALL TO ACTION: FUTURE TESTING

- Check your health system website for updates
- Call your clinic to set up a COVID-19 test
- Drive-up testing sites may be available in some locations (please call ahead)
- Only request COVID-19 if you meet qualifications
- No vaccines or medications to treat COVID-19 ready for use

Sanford remains committed to serve our patients and employers.

For more information: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

Q&A

PLEASE SUBMIT OTHER QUESTIONS TO:
OCCMEDENTERPRISE@SANFORDHEALTH.ORG