

MEMORANDUM

To: District Employees

From: Ventris C. Gibson, Director, Department of Human Resources

Date: Monday, March 2, 2020

Subject: Coronavirus Update

Coronavirus Disease 2019, also known as COVID-19, is a new respiratory virus that originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Since its emergence in December 2019, COVID-19 has been discovered across the globe and in the United States.

For the safety of our workforce, we want to keep you updated on the steps the District Government is taking to prepare for potential impacts related to the coronavirus. DC Health has confirmed there are no cases of coronavirus in Washington, DC.

On Friday, Mayor Muriel Bowser issued a [Mayor's Order](#) which named DC Health and the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency responsible for coordinating the District's emergency response planning for any potential impacts from coronavirus.

Since this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, DC Health is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide updated information and education awareness on coronavirus as it becomes available.

As you prepare your home, family, and person, we encourage you to follow good hygiene practices for prevention of contagious diseases such as coronavirus or seasonal influenza. Help stop the spread of germs by:

- Staying home from work until you are free of fever, signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours and without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicants.
 - Seeking medical attention – if you have reason to believe you have been exposed to coronavirus or influenza. Call your healthcare provider before visiting a healthcare facility.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
 - Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.
 - Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, if you have symptoms of acute respiratory illness.
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If you have had close contact with someone infected with coronavirus, call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure to a patient with COVID-19. If you are impacted by COVID-19 or seasonal influenza, promptly contact your immediate supervisor to request to be placed on sick or annual leave, leave without pay, or other earned leave (for example, restored leave or compensatory time).

Additionally, we recommend you and your household are prepared for the possible impact COVID-19 may have in our community:

- Have an adequate supply of nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand – pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Check on your regular prescription drugs to make sure you have an adequate supply, refill your prescriptions as needed.
- Have a thermometer, tissues, soap, and hand sanitizer.
- Have extra non-perishable food items at home.

Considering our responsibility to continue to provide high-quality, equitable service to our residents, this week, the District will begin sharing public messaging to stop stigma associated with coronavirus:

- **Coronavirus doesn't recognize race, nationality, or ethnicity.** Coronavirus (COVID-19) started in geographically in Wuhan, China. Having Chinese ancestry — or any other ancestry — does not make a person more vulnerable to this illness.
- **Wearing a mask does not mean a person is ill.** People wear masks for a variety of reasons, including to avoid pollen and air pollution and for cultural and social reasons. We should not judge someone for wearing a mask or assume they are sick.
- **Speak up if you hear, see, or read discriminatory comments.** Correct false information and remind the person that prejudiced language and actions make us all less safe. If discrimination occurs, report it to DC's Office of Human Rights at 202-727-4559.
- **Show compassion and support for those most closely impacted.** Listen to, acknowledge and, with permission, share the stories of people experiencing stigma, along with a message that bigotry is not acceptable in our community.

For more information about COVID-19, visit:

- dchealth.dc.gov/coronavirus
- cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/

Agency human resources offices may contact the Department of Human Resources for additional health, safety, or leave management information.