

**IMA COVID-19 Conference Call Remarks by
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March 17, 2020**

We now have 105 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in 15 counties across Illinois.

As you have seen, the number of cases is increasing each day, as is the number of locations.

People should assume novel coronavirus is in their communities and take steps to protect themselves and reduce the spread.

There is evidence that transmission of the virus often occurs when symptoms first start so it is important to limit close contact with people as much as possible – even if you don't feel that sick.

Along those lines, if you have mild illness, we ask you to stay home and rest until you are well. If your symptoms get worse, call a health care provider and they can determine if you need medical treatment and implement steps to reduce the risk of exposure to those in waiting rooms and health care workers.

If you do seek medical care, and we ask that you do so responsibly, know that not everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19.

Based on CDC guidance, health care providers will evaluate your symptoms, ask about contact to a known case of COVID-19 or any recent travel to an affected geographic area, and evaluate if you are at higher risk for serious illness.

Based on these factors, the health care professional will determine if testing is needed.

We want to remind people that we are prioritizing testing for those who are at higher-risk of illness and ask that those who have mild symptoms and do not meet those criteria not demand to be tested.

We need to reserve our testing supplies for those who need them most.

We also need to make sure the worried-well or those with mild-symptoms are not overwhelming our health care system. We ask people who do not have any underlying health conditions and are experiencing mild symptoms to stay home

It is important that we reduce the amount of virus circulating in the community. This happens by reducing the number of people who come in contact with the virus. Bottom line – stay home as much as possible.

If you do have to go out, practice good health actions.

Try to keep 6 feet between the person you are talking with, make sure to wash your hands properly and frequently, clean frequently touched surfaces often, and sneeze or cough into a tissue and then wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

These are things we ALL must do. It is these steps will make the biggest difference.

We hope, when looking back, our actions seems like drastic steps and perhaps an overaction. But that means public health, with the communities' help, was successful in preventing illness and possibly deaths.

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.

- Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.
- **Separate sick employees:**
 - CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).
- **Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees:**
 - Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
 - Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
 - Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
 - Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.