

## NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE WORKFORCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Updates April 2: Update on what to do if you have recently traveled to an area with a known outbreak on pages 20-21 and new information on what to do if you are an active member of the military and are called up, and if you are a healthcare worker or a physician and want to volunteer at McCormick Place or other hospitals on pages 21-22.*

### GENERAL COVID-19 INFORMATION

#### **Q: What is 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and why is it important?**

**A:** Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people; numerous other coronaviruses circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people such as has been seen with [Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus \(MERS-CoV\)](#) and [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus \(SARS-CoV\)](#). A novel (new) coronavirus is causing an outbreak of pneumonia illness in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This outbreak began in early December 2019 and continues to expand in scope and magnitude.

#### **Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

**A:** Signs and symptoms of this illness include fever ( $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing.

#### **Q: What can I do to prevent coronavirus?**

**A:** There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 (coronavirus). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyday actions to help prevent the spread of infection, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash 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. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Practice social distancing.

#### **Q: What does the Stay-at-Home order mean and should I still come to work?**

**A:** Under the order, all Illinois residents must remain in their place of residence through April 30, unless undertaking an “Essential Activity.” Healthcare operations are deemed both “Essential Businesses” and “Essential Activities” under the order.

The following are guidelines to help NM employees, physicians and contractors understand the implications of this order.

Examples of what you **CAN** do:

- Travel to and from work with your identification badge.
- Work from home if authorized by your supervisor.
- Take your children to a NM child care facility, other people's homes for child care or continue to have nannies or babysitters provide home-based care.
- Travel to the grocery store or pharmacy, or a health care facility to perform tasks essential to the health and safety of your family or household members.
- Engage in outdoor activities in compliance with social distancing requirements. Please note that effective March 27, Mayor Lightfoot issued an Executive Order that closes the Chicago lakefront, Riverwalk and 606, including adjacent trails, green spaces, playgrounds and facilities.

Examples of what you **CANNOT** do:

- Host or attend gatherings.
- Take your children to the playground if unable to maintain social distancing.
- Visit bars, restaurants (dine-in), recreational centers or fitness centers.

Clinical staff and those in operations that support the clinical team should continue to report for work. All functions that have been moved to remote work should continue to operate in that manner until further notice.

If you are unclear if you should report to work, please talk to your manager. Prior to sending any employee home or asking them not to report to work, your manager will work with the local NM Labor Pool to reallocate resources to fill needs throughout the system.

NM has created a Labor Pool to identify staff who are available to satisfy staffing needs outside of their location or operating unit. Please complete the short survey form so we can identify opportunities outside of your current function. Please note, accessing the form outside of the NM network may require verification code authentication which will be sent to your mobile phone. **Labor Pool Staffing Form**. Each hospital has its own staffing efforts underway. These survey responses will be used to supplement and enhance local efforts.

NM has created a separate Labor Pool form for physicians and advanced practice nurses, **Physician/APP Volunteer Staffing Survey**, with additional details requested. If you are a physician or APN please complete this separate survey. As with the staff survey, accessing the form outside of the NM network may require verification code authentication.

**Q: Do I need a letter from Northwestern Medicine identifying me as part of the essential workforce thus enabling me to travel to work or use child care?**

**A:** You are not required to carry a letter as part of the official order and your Northwestern Medicine issued badge should suffice in most circumstances. If you have a unique situation and need a supporting document, please send an email to the MyNM Service Center ([MyNMServicecenter@nm.org](mailto:MyNMServicecenter@nm.org)). Please provide the specific reason for your request.

**Q: Is Northwestern Medicine accepting donations?**

**A:** For all questions related to donations, [click here](#).

**Q: Do you have well-being tips for the workforce related to physical and mental health during COVID-19?**

**A:** Yes. Maintaining your physical and mental well-being is vitally important while we continue to care for our patients, visitors and families. Please [click here](#) for helpful tips and resources.

**Q: As a caregiver, how do I keep myself and my family safe?**

**A:** The ongoing care and safety of our staff is of primary importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following are some key tips to keep in mind to keep you and your family safe following work in a hospital or clinic environment.

This virus is no different than others that you may encounter during patient care such as MRSA and C-DIFF, and is easily killed by normal cleaning and laundering processes.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- Proper use of PPE is specifically designed to protect you and your family. Please follow the published current guidelines, including the usage of gown, goggles, appropriate mask and eye protection in the care of patients with COVID-19 to prevent contamination. [Click here](#).
- Proper donning and doffing of PPE is designed to keep you safe. Perform hand hygiene frequently. More information and guidance can be found on NMI. ([Click here](#)).

**Attire**

- Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 does not survive well on fabric, thus it is not a source of transmission.
- Staff may be more comfortable wearing street clothes to work and changing into clinical apparel or different clothes at work, then changing back into street clothes prior to going home.
- Continue to remove, treat and launder work clothes as usual.

**Personal Items and Space**

- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched items with household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants.

**Your Family Members**

- It is fine to be around your family as long as you do not have symptoms of illness. You can learn more about the symptoms of coronavirus [here](#).
- Continue to follow good hand hygiene and overall cleanliness at home. Additional guidance can be found on [NMI](#) and [Physician Forum](#).

**EXPOSURE/RETURN TO WORK**

*If you have an immediate question about a potential exposure, call the Northwestern Medicine COVID-19 Hotline at **312.47.COVID** and follow the prompts.*

**Q: Is there a simple guide to help me determine next steps if I have an exposure or become symptomatic?**

**A:** There is not one rule for everyone who falls into a certain category and that is the reason we ask

that you call the COVID-19 hotline at 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843). The following grid, however, provides information that may give you and your manager some indication of next steps. *Please keep in mind these are general guidelines and testing is dependent upon each individual situation.*

If employee ...	And has a confirmed exposure ...	<i>The COVID-19 Hotline at 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843) will provide direction in your specific case. Potential actions may be:</i>
Does not have symptoms	Will not be tested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to self-monitor</li> <li>• Report any changes to manager and COVID Hotline</li> </ul>
Has symptoms	Should call the COVID-19 hotline to determine if testing is appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay home until symptoms improve</li> <li>• Must be fever free for 24 hours without assistance of fever-reducing medications before requesting a Return to Work clearance by calling the COVID-19 hotline.</li> </ul>
Has symptoms	And has been tested for COVID-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remain home until called by Corporate Health within 72 hours of testing with results</li> <li>• If employee does not receive a call within 72 hours, call the COVID-19 Hotline.</li> </ul>

**Q: Am I required to come to work if I think I might have COVID-19?**

**A:** No. As with any acute respiratory illness, you should stay home if you are sick.

**Q: What should I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19?**

**A:**

- If you are currently at work:
  1. Ensure your face mask is in place.
  2. Notify your manager you are feeling ill and request to go home.
  3. Call the COVID-19 Hotline at 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843). They will do a short assessment to determine if you qualify for a COVID-19 test or assist you in returning back to work after illness.
- If you are at home and **not** in need of urgent medical attention, call your healthcare provider to tell them that you may have COVID-19.
- If you are at home or at work and need urgent medical attention, wear a face mask if one is available, and go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911. Inform 911 or the ED triage nurse that you think you may have COVID-19 so staff can properly triage you and protect their health.

- If you are ill at home, wear a face mask around others. If you are unable to wear a face mask, others should not stay in the same room as you, and they should put a face mask on if they need to enter your room. Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Follow the CDC-recommended everyday actions. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
- Although there have not been reports of pets and other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, limit contact with animals until more is known about the virus.

**Q: How will NM benefits cover doctors' visits for COVID-19?**

**A:** Starting March 9 and for the next 90 days, NM PPO and NM HDHP plans will offer \$0 member co-pay for telemedicine visits for any reason. This includes all NM Tier 1 and Aetna Tier 2 providers delivering synchronous virtual care (live videoconferencing or telemedicine medical consultations). Aetna will also waive member cost share for all diagnostic testing related to COVID-19. This policy will cover the test kit for patients who meet CDC guidelines for testing, which can be done in any approved laboratory location.

**Q: What should I expect if I am asked to be tested for COVID-19?**

**A:** All employee and physician testing is assessed by the COVID-19 hotline to determine if you meet the COVID-19 testing criteria. If it is determined that you qualify for testing, you will receive an order and be directed to a testing location. Employees and physicians will receive a call from Corporate Health with results within 48-72 hours. Do not visit a testing site prior to receiving those instructions. Any questions about testing or treatment should be directed to the COVID-19 Hotline at 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843).

**Q: What precautions should I take if someone in my household has a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis?**

**A:** Household members and caregivers in a non-healthcare setting may have close contact with a person with symptomatic, laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or a person under investigation. Close contacts should monitor their health and call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.

If you are a close contact you should also follow these recommendations:

- Monitor the patient's symptoms. If the person is getting sicker, call his or her healthcare provider and tell them that the person has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the person who is ill as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.
- Household members should care for any pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, aided by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.

- Perform hand hygiene frequently. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- The person who is ill should wear a facemask when around other people. If he or she is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), you, as the caregiver, should wear a mask when you are in the same room.

Refer to the following CDC guidelines for additional information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>

**Q: I have tested negative for COVID-19, but my roommate or family member has received a positive result. What should I do?**

**A:**

- Notify your manager.
- Call the COVID-19 Hotline at 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843). They will do a short assessment and advise you of next steps.

**Q: My roommate or family member is ill, but not diagnosed with COVID-19 and I do not have symptoms. Should I still come to work?**

**A:** Yes, you should come to work and continue to self-monitor by taking your temperature twice a day and being mindful of symptoms such as sore throat, cough or fever. If you develop any of these symptoms and are at work:

- Ensure your face mask is in place.
- Notify your manager you are feeling ill and request to go home.
- Call the COVID-19 Hotline at 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843). They will do a short assessment and advise you of next steps.

**Q: What do I do if I suspect a patient may have COVID-19?**

**A:** If you suspect a patient may have COVID-19 based on the physical symptoms they are exhibiting, such as fever and respiratory symptoms, follow these steps:

1. Place a surgical mask on the patient for protection of themselves and others;
2. Move patient to an empty room or in an area that is not within the general public space. Immediately page Infection Prevention (IP) who will evaluate the patient and determine if they should be transferred to an airborne isolation room;
3. You will then don the appropriate PPE recommended in the "[Specific Guidelines in the Care of the ROCOVID or COVID Patient](#)" documents posted on the intranet.
4. Keep the patient in the room until a staff member is ready to take them to another room;
5. The patient should continue to wear a surgical mask until next steps are determined for hospital care, or until the end of an outpatient encounter.
6. The employee should continue to wear appropriate PPE while caring for the patient. Once care is complete, staff should carefully remove PPE and clean hands according to [CDC doffing guidelines](#) to prevent contamination.
7. If the patient is confirmed, Infection Prevention will notify your manager and inform them on your next steps. *Please note: next steps will be on a case by case basis depending on risk factors.*
8. If you have questions, contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 312.47.COVID (472.6843).

**Q: What do I do if I think I have been exposed to COVID-19 while at work?**

**A:** If you have been exposed to a patient with confirmed COVID-19, follow these steps:

1. Inform your manager that you may have been exposed.
2. Call the COVID-19 Hotline at 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843) and inform the hotline team that you have been exposed to an NM patient or fellow employee with confirmed COVID-19. They will verify by asking you a series of screening questions and will notify Corporate Health of your case.
3. You should hear back from Corporate Health within 24 hours after your initial call with the COVID-19 Hotline.
4. Document the exposure by completing an Employee Incident Report (EIR) located on NMI. If immediate medical treatment is needed, you must complete the EIR within 24 hours of the exposure. If you cannot complete the EIR within this timeframe (due to emergent conditions or another reason) your manager will need to complete the EIR on your behalf within 24 hours of the injury.
5. If it is confirmed that you may have been exposed and reporting of your temperature and symptoms is required, you will receive an email directing you to self-monitor your temperature and symptoms for 14 days after exposure.
6. You can continue to work during this time as long as you do not have a fever or any symptoms.

**Q: Are pregnant healthcare workers at increased risk for adverse outcomes if they care for patients with COVID-19?**

**A:** When caring for patients, pregnant women should engage in usual preventive actions to avoid infection like washing hands and following safe work practices. NM recommends that pregnant individuals talk to their health care provider about COVID-19 to discuss whether and discuss if any specific limitations or modification should be established during pregnancy. If medical restrictions are requested by your provider, a written letter to Corporate Health is needed. Call Corporate Health at 312.694.0800 (press 1) to make an appointment with Corporate Health to review your case. Make sure to bring your doctor's letter to the visit. Pregnancy restrictions related to COVID-19 will be addressed in the same manner as restrictions related to pregnancy for other reasons. *Refer to NMHC policy HS #04.0220 Reproductive Hazards Program for Declared Pregnant Workers.* For further information visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html>

**Q: Am I at increased risk to contract COVID-19 if I am pregnant?**

**A:** Scientific information has not established the susceptibility of pregnant women to COVID-19. Pregnant women experience immunologic and physiologic changes which might make them more susceptible to viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19. Pregnant women also might be at risk for severe illness, morbidity or mortality compared to the general population as observed in cases of other related coronavirus infections [including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)] and other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza, during pregnancy. Pregnant women should engage in usual preventive actions to avoid infection like washing hands often and avoiding people who are sick. Pregnancy restrictions related to COVID-19 will be addressed in the same manner as

restrictions related to pregnancy for other reasons. For further information, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html).

**Q: Is my baby at increased risk to contract COVID-19 if I am breastfeeding?**

**A:** Much is unknown about how COVID-19 is spread. Person-to-person spread is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza (flu) and other respiratory pathogens spread. In limited studies on women with COVID-19 and another coronavirus infection, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV), the virus has not been detected in breast milk; however, we do not know whether mothers with COVID-19 can transmit the virus via breast milk.

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. Whether and how to start or continue breastfeeding should be determined by the mother in coordination with her family and healthcare providers. CDC recommends that someone **with confirmed COVID-19 or who is symptomatic** should take all possible precautions to avoid spreading the virus to her infant, including washing her hands before touching the infant and wearing a facemask, if possible, while feeding at the breast. If expressing breast milk with a manual or electric breast pump, the mother should wash her hands before touching any pump or bottle parts and follow recommendations for proper pump cleaning after each use. If possible, consider having someone who is well feed the expressed breast milk to the infant. For CDC information, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-guidance-breastfeeding.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-guidance-breastfeeding.html).

**Q: What should I do if I have a high-risk medical condition that includes being immunocompromised or I am older than 60 years old?**

**A:** Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions—such as heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, seem to be at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness. As people age, their immune systems change, making it harder for their body to fight off diseases and infection. Many older adults are also more likely to have underlying health conditions that make it harder to cope with and recover from illness. If you are at higher risk, it is advised that you:

- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others (social distancing).
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- Avoid crowds as much as possible (avoid traveling by plane, going to movie theaters, shopping at crowded malls.) Try to reduce your face-to-face contact with others.
- This does not mean staying in your house, but being thoughtful about activities that you are doing.
- If there is an outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible.

**Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs**

- Be aware of potential COVID-19 symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath. If you feel as though you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
- If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in chest, new confusion or inability to rouse, bluish lips or face.



When caring for patients, those with high-risk medical factors should engage in usual preventive actions to avoid infection – careful handwashing and following safe work practices. If medical restrictions are requested by your provider, a written letter to Corporate Health is required. Call Corporate Health at 312.694.0800 (press 1) to make an appointment to review your case. You must bring your doctor's letter to the visit. Medical restrictions related to COVID-19 will be addressed in the same manner as restrictions related to other reasons.

For further information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications>

**Q: What if I need to take extra precautions due to my own or a family or household member's serious chronic medical condition?**

**A:** NM recognizes that some employees may be concerned about potential COVID-19 exposure because they or their household member have a serious chronic medical condition such as heart or lung diseases, moderate to severe asthma or are immunocompromised for reasons including cancer treatment. If an employee feels that they or their household member meet these criteria, they should reach out to their manager who will take the following steps:

- Work with you manager to determine if there are options to reduce your time at work such as telecommuting, working in an alternative environment with fewer people or working with reduced schedule/duties.
- If no alternative arrangements are feasible, you may be able to use your PTO/sick/vacation bank accruals until exhaustion with the ability to go into negative status for up to two weeks of paid time off until April 15. Employees can use up to 80 hours including any existing bank of PTO/sick/vacation.

**Q: What if I have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 outside of work and Public Health says I cannot return to work?**

**A:** While COVID-19 protocols are in effect, you will be allowed to use your PTO accruals or vacation accruals as applicable, or you may choose to go unpaid for this period. You will be required to provide documentation to support your time off work. If documentation is not provided, time off will not be approved and will count toward attendance occurrences.

**Q: Who do I contact if I have a COVID-19-related question or missed a call from Corporate Health?**

**A:** Do not contact Corporate Health directly. All COVID-19-related questions must be directed back to the hotline at 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843). You are asked to wait 24 hours for any initial inquiries. If you miss a call back, please call the hotline back.

**Q: How can I return to work following the screening process, or if I stayed home due to illness or was sent home due to illness?**

**A:** To return back to work, your symptoms need to have significantly improved and you must have no fever (99.9<sup>0</sup> or less) without the use of fever-reducing medications, such as Tylenol, for 24 hours. You will need to contact the COVID-19 hotline 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843) and request a "Return to Work Clearance" from Corporate Health. A member of the Corporate Health team will reach out to you for a consult within 24 hours. Once Corporate Health determines you can return to work, you will receive a "Return to Work" clearance email to share with your manager with the established date on which you can return.

**Q: Do I need a note from a physician to return to work after any respiratory illness?**

**A:** While it is preferable to have a note from your provider to return back to work from symptoms of illness, it is not necessary since all staff will be screened each day before the start of their shift. If you have been off of work with any of the symptoms listed below, you will need to contact 312.47.COVID and request a “Return to Work Clearance” when your symptoms improve.

- New or worsening cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Temperature above 100 degrees F

**Q: How long do I need to stay off work if my symptoms are mild?**

**A:** During the initial call with the COVID-19 hotline 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843), you will be instructed on an appropriate timeline to return to work. Typically, you can return to work after symptoms have significantly improved and/or you have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol. If you have or had respiratory symptoms, you will need to contact the COVID hotline to request a return to work clearance.

**SCREENING**

**Q: Will NM be screening employees for COVID-19 symptoms when they come to work? How will the screening process work?**

**A:** At this time, the Illinois Department of Public Health asks all healthcare workers be screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms. Each site in the Northwestern Medicine system has tailored their screening locations and processes to accommodate differences in facility layouts and numbers of staff and visitors. Please review the communication from your NM location for more detailed instructions as to how and where screening will take place.

Please note the following:

- Staff must arrive to work through designated staff entrances only.
- For most locations, staff should plan to arrive 15 minutes before their shifts to complete the screening process.
- All staff and visitor entrances in hospital locations will employ a new camera technology to detect body temperature and alert screening staff of those with a fever while allowing for appropriate social distancing.

Upon arrival at work, staff will follow a screening protocol confirming they do not have the following symptoms:

- Cough (new or worsening)
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Fever ( $\geq 100.0$  F) and/or have taken medication to reduce fever within the past 24 hours
- Someone in your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 since you last worked

Any staff member who answers yes to any of these questions or who is identified as having a fever by the thermal scanning technology will need to return home and:

- Notify your manager that you will not be at work.

- Call 312.47.COVID for next steps and disposition.

Please do not come to work if you have any of the symptoms describe above.

**Q: Can you provide more information about the new camera technology that will be used to detect body temperature?**

**A:** The cameras are being deployed at all NM hospital facilities to maximize the safety of our staff, patients and visitors through the use of infrared cameras to identify those who have an elevated temperature. The video is streaming and images will not be stored for future use. NM has confirmed that the technology complies with privacy laws. Staff who are identified with an elevated temperature will be asked to return home, contact their manager and call the COVID Hotline.

**Q: Is the same screening process being used in non-hospital facilities such as ambulatory/ outpatient clinics or administrative buildings?**

**A:** Outpatient and administrative facilities will not use the camera technology. Screening processes will vary based on location and need. Please review the communication from your NM location for more detailed instructions as to how and where screening will take place.

**Q: How will my manager know if I was sent home due to symptoms of illness following the screening process?**

**A:** Any staff member who presents to work with symptoms will be asked to return home. For those locations where screening is happening at the entrance, immediately following the screening process, both the employee and the manager also will receive an email notification that includes identified next steps. Employees who are being asked to return home should reach out to their manager directly as well.

**Q: How can I return to work following the screening process, or if I stayed home due to illness or was sent home due to illness?**

**A:** To return back to work, your symptoms need to have significantly improved and you must have no fever (99.9<sup>0</sup> or less) without the use of fever-reducing medications, such as Tylenol, for 24 hours. You will need to contact the COVID-19 hotline 312.47.COVID (321.472.6843) and request a "Return to Work Clearance" from Corporate Health. A member of the Corporate Health team will reach out to you for a consult within 24 hours. Once Corporate Health determines you can return to work, you will receive a "Return to Work" clearance email to share with your manager with the established date on which you can return.

**ON-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES AND VISITORS**

**Q: Are our volunteer services continuing?**

**A:** Northwestern Medicine is suspending volunteer services through April 15. At that time we will reassess the situation, and volunteers will be notified when they can return to service.

**Q: Can clinical and non-clinical students come into our institution?**

**A:** Effective Monday, March 16, the following changes will be in effect for clinical and non-clinical students. Note this does not apply to medical students and fellows affiliated with McGaw.

1. All high school student programs, healthcare observations and shadowing experiences are

being postponed until further notice. Community Services is communicating with high schools that have formal relationships with Northwestern Medicine to ensure their students are aware they should not come to our sites.

2. We are still allowing clinical students with formal educational agreements with NM, such as nursing students, to be on-site. If their schools are closing and have given guidance to the students to cease clinical rotations, we will of course respect that direction.
3. NM will limit student direct care of known or suspected cases of COVID-19 infection until further notice. We suggest that, other than limiting direct care of COVID-19 patients, clinical students continue their roles as part of the care team.

**Q: Can visiting students come into our institution?**

**A:** In the interest of student safety, NM will limit student direct care of known or suspected cases of COVID-19 infection until better epidemiologic data are available. We suggest that, other than limiting direct care of patients with COVID- 19, students continue their roles as part of the care team.

**Q: Are vendors allowed on campus?**

**A:** All non-essential vendor appointments should be postponed. Deliveries of supplies may continue.

**Q: Is Northwestern Medicine still allowing service animals in our patient care facilities?**

**A:** As a temporary measure, Northwestern Medicine will not allow service animals in the Emergency Department or inpatient areas. If a patient with a service animal is coming for an outpatient visit, they should contact the appointment location to confirm whether it will be allowed during this time. If there is an exceptional case in an inpatient setting, staff should contact their manager or evening administrator. Additional information can be found on the [Inclusion page](#) on NMI.

**CLINICAL FAQs**

**Q: As a clinical staff member or physician caring for COVID-19 patients, should I wear hospital-laundered scrubs?**

**A:** There is no recommendation from the CDC or other sources that staff wear hospital-laundered scrubs when caring for COVID-19 patients. With proper use of PPE, your clothing will not be contaminated. However, beginning on March 25, Northwestern Memorial Hospital will begin an optional limited distribution of hospital- laundered scrubs to a small group of units that have repeated contact with COVID-19 patients. Given increased demand across the region, scrub availability is limited thus there will be an assessment prior to any continuation or expansion of the program beyond the initial parameters. We will continue to evaluate interventions that support our guiding principles of keeping our patients safe, keeping our staff safe and conserving resources.

**Q: What if my license or certification is going to expire?**

**A:** Healthcare professionals with licenses issued by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation that have renewal dates between March 1 and July 31, 2020, have been granted an **automatic extension through September 30, 2020**. All current licensed professionals under the department's jurisdiction whose license renewal deadlines fall within the period of March 1 and July 31, 2020, will have through September 30, 2020, to complete continuing education coursework.

Additionally, if you are approaching your expiration date for American Heart Association certification in Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) and/or Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), you will automatically be given a **60-day extension** on your expiration dates. If you have a Neonatal Resuscitation for Providers (NRP) card with an expiration date in March, April or May 2020, per the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics, you will be allowed an extension beyond the recommended renewal date, for **up to 60 days**

**Q: Are CPR classes still taking place?**

**A:** All CPR classes (BLS, ACLS, PALS) through the NM Academy are postponed starting Tuesday March 24, 2020 and continuing through April 7, 2020. Individuals who have been enrolled in these classes through NM Learning & Performance will receive email notifications that their classes have been postponed. Once the classes are able to be resumed, it is anticipated that extra sessions will be added to address the increased need for enrollment.

As a reminder, if you are approaching your expiration date for American Heart Association certification in Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) and/or Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), you will automatically be given a 60-day extension on your expiration dates.

If you have a Neonatal Resuscitation for Providers (NRP) card with an expiration date in March, April or May 2020, per the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics, you will be allowed an extension beyond the recommended renewal date, for up to 60 days.

**Q: What kind of diagnostic testing should be done when advised by Infection Prevention or IDPH?**

**A:** A Respiratory Pathogen Panel (RPP) should be ordered in addition to the specimens to be sent to IDPH\*. Two forms should be filled out: an [investigation form](#) and a [test requisition form](#). Approval is required from the health department to send specimens for testing. Do NOT send specimens through the pneumatic tube system. All specimens collected from these patients MUST be hand carried to the laboratory.

**Note:** Previous PPE requirements for RPP followed airborne precautions. As of March 18, collection of a NP or OP swab is not an aerosol generating procedure and should follow droplet precautions per the CDC.

- Collect specimens wearing PPE appropriate for the patient's location as recommended in the [Specific Guidance in Care of RCOVID or COVID Patients](#). Carefully remove PPE and clean hands according to [CDC donning and doffing guidelines](#) to prevent contamination.
- Several specimens should be collected:
  - Lower respiratory tract (BAL, tracheal aspirate, sputum)
  - Upper respiratory tract (nasopharyngeal (x2) and oropharyngeal swab) in viral transport media.  
Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts.
- Refrigerate at 2-8°C.

*\* Lab testing in an ambulatory setting only under direction of Infection Prevention.*

**Q: What precautions are required for ROCOVID-19 or COVID-19 in inpatient and ED areas?**

**A:**

- Per the newest CDC guidance, COVID-19 is transmitted by droplets. You should follow droplet precautions (surgical mask) along with gown, gloves, and eye protection, except when aerosolized secretions are expected from a health care procedure. See the [Specific Guidance in Care of ROCOVID or COVID Patients](#) for full PPE guidelines for care with or without an aerosol generating procedure (AGP).
- Symptomatic patients must don a surgical mask as soon as they are identified and be transported to a standard, private room; patients can be evaluated and treated in standard, private rooms with the door closed.
- Once the patient is masked and isolated, page COVID INPATIENT (2-6651).
- An airborne infection isolation room (AIIR) is not recommended by CDC unless the patient will be undergoing an AGP. See the [Clinical Care of the ROCOVID or COVID patient](https://nmi.nmh.org/wcs/blob/1390904506157/20200321-ppe-recs-clinical-care.pdf) (<https://nmi.nmh.org/wcs/blob/1390904506157/20200321-ppe-recs-clinical-care.pdf>) for full PPE guidelines according to the patient's location and for definitions of AGPs. Carefully remove PPE and clean hands according to [CDC donning and doffing guidelines](#) to prevent contamination.

**NOTE:** The collection of a NP or OP swab is not an aerosol generating procedure, per the CDC.

**Q: What precautions are required for COVID-19 in outpatient areas and Immediate Care Centers?**

**A:**

- Per the newest CDC guidance, COVID-19 is transmitted by droplets. **Patients who are being evaluated for possible COVID should be seen in a setting equipped with gown, gloves, procedure mask and eye protection (goggles or face shield).**
- Symptomatic patients must don a surgical mask as soon as they are identified and be transported to a standard, private room; patients can be evaluated and treated in standard, private rooms with the door closed.
- Airborne PPE recommendations should be followed for aerosol generating procedures (AGPs); AGPs should not be performed in outpatient areas or Immediate Care Centers.
- See the [Specific Guidance in Care for ROCOVID or COVID Patients](#) for full PPE guidelines in outpatient areas and Immediate Care Centers. You should carefully remove PPE and clean your hands according to [CDC donning and doffing guidelines](#) to prevent contamination.
- [Ambulatory Scheduling Algorithm](#)
- [Ambulatory Clinic Algorithm](#)
- [ICC Algorithm](#)

**Q: What are aerosol-generating procedures or AGPs?**

**A:** Procedures, patient care or therapies with a high-risk for aerosolizing patient respiratory secretions and infectious agents. They include:

- Tracheal intubation and extubation, all airway management
- Non-invasive ventilation, exchange and removal of an artificial airway
- Tracheotomy and tracheostomy care
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Manual ventilation before intubation
- Bronchoscopy non-bronchoscopic bronchoalveolar lavage (NB-BAL)
- Sputum induction and speech therapy
- Nebulizer treatments, CPAP, BiPAP
- Open suctioning
- Autopsy
- Placement or removal of an NG tube
- All respiratory therapy procedures

**Q: What kind of therapy is given to patients with COVID-19?**

**A:** Care is supportive.

**Q: Is there medication information I can give to patients?**

**A:** See [Patient FAQs: Medications and COVID-19](#).

**Q: Are there any prescribing recommendations for physicians?**

**A:** See [Physician FAQs: Medications and COVID-19](#).

**Q: What cleaning products can I use for the room and equipment?**

**A:** Routine cleaning products and hospital-approved disinfectants can be used. Nurses will assist with daily cleaning tasks (pull trash and wipe surfaces when in room for patient care) to minimize patient exposures. See the [Specific Guidance in Care for ROCOVID or COVID Patient](#) \* for full PPE and room access recommendations.

**Q: Can I refuse to provide care for a patient who has or is suspected of having COVID-19 or refuse to be reassigned to an area where patients have or are suspected of having COVID-19?**

**A:** Generally, staff may not refuse to provide care. Employee safety is a priority and NM continues to monitor its supply to provide appropriate and sufficient PPE. Please see the Clinical Care of the ROCOVID or COVID Patient on the intranet for PPE recommendations. If an employee believes that their own medical condition prevents them from accepting an assignment or reassignment, a written letter from their provider to Corporate Health is required. Please see the FAQs entitled “Are pregnant healthcare workers at increased risk for adverse outcomes if they care for patients with COVID-19?” and “What should I do if I have a high-risk medical conditions that includes being immunocompromised or I am older than 60?” Employees who refuse to accept assignments without submitting adequate documentation to Corporate Health to support their refusal will be unpaid.

## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

**Q: Can I take PPE home for personal use?**

**A:** No. It is vital that all PPE, such as masks, gloves and gowns, as well as all other supplies, are

preserved for the use of our staff in caring for patients. PPE and other supplies should not be removed from any NM facility.

**Q: I have never been fit tested for an N95 respirator. Should I be fit tested now?**

**A:** If you float to a new role during the COVID-19 response and need to be fit tested, Corporate Health has established mobile testing stations. The local labor pool will direct staff as needed. If you have never been notified of the need to be fit tested on a respirator, you do not need to be fit tested now.

**Q: How do I confirm I have been fit tested and know what N95 respirator brand/size I should use?**

**A:** Individual staff can review their fit-testing status and what type of N95 respirator they are currently fitted to by going to the MyNM Services Center -> **Health and Safety -> Vaccination and Immunization History**. Staff and providers should not use an N95 unless they have been fitted to that brand/size.

**Q: Can anyone wear a Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR) instead of a N95 respirator to care for COVID-19 patients?**

**A:** We have limited PAPRs throughout the organization for individuals to use as an alternative to an N95. Corporate Health has prioritized the PAPRS for individuals who meet the following criteria:

- Perform high-risk aerosolizing procedures such as: bronchoscopy, sputum induction, endotracheal intubation or extubation, open suctioning of airways, cardiopulmonary resuscitation or autopsies.
- Cannot properly wear an N95 mask due to facial reconstruction, extreme weight loss/gain, braces or dentures.

**Q: Can I wear a PAPR if I have facial hair?**

**A:** Individuals will not be given a PAPR because they have facial hair. The limited number of PAPRS will be prioritized based on an individual meeting the established criteria. Facial hair should be shaved in order to fit an N95. Employees who wish to request a religious exemption from shaving should inform their managers or Human Resources to follow the exemption-request process.

**Q: How long can PAPR hoods be used?**

**A:** As a conservation measure, you should use the same PAPR hood over multiple shifts when treating the same patient as long as the following conditions are met:

- PAPR hood should be used by the same staff member with the same patient only.
- Staff should write their name on the PAPR hood and store it in the anteroom between uses. Departments should ensure a marker is available to write names.
- Outside of the PAPR hood must be cleaned between every use with a disinfectant wipe (i.e., Sani-Cloth, Bleach Wipe).

**Q: What is my region-specific process for checking out a PAPR?**

**A:** For region specific PAPR details, please review policy titled Respiratory Protection Program (NMHC HS 04.0210) and refer to the related document titled "Process for Obtaining a PAPR."



**Q: Are training resources available for a PAPR, if needed?**

**A:** Yes. For a refresher on PAPR use, individuals may self-enroll into the e-learning module titled “Respiratory Protection Program.” When prompted within the module, select “I am a Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR) User” and then select the region in which you work.

**Q: Can N95’s be reused?**

**A:** Please see [Guidelines for Safe Re-Use of PPE](#).

**Q: I have been fit tested on a 3M Aura 1870+ Respirator. Do I need to be re-fitted to a Halyard N95?**

**A:** Yes. OSHA regulations dictate that any respirator used by staff should be fitted to them. If you have not been adequately fitted there is no guarantee that the N95 will protect you from particulates in the air, so fit testing is crucial to ensure your safety. NM has secured Halyard N95’s for the workforce and Corporate Health has made re-fit testing sessions available on your campus. Ask your manager for more details.

**Q: Is there a difference between a Kimberly Clark N95 and Halyard N95?**

**A:** No. These are identical. Halyard purchased Kimberly Clark, hence the name change. If you are fitted to a Kimberly Clark mask you will fit a Halyard mask.

**Q: What PPE should I use for suspect/confirmed COVID-19 patients?**

**A:** Please review guidance available on [PPE Resources](#).

**REMOTE WORK FAQs**

**Q: Can I work remotely?**

**A:** At this time, working remotely is strongly encouraged when possible. It is important to note that employees who are working from home voluntarily and not due to monitoring protocols may be called back to work. Employees and physicians should talk to their manager about available options if they believe they are at heightened risk as designated by the CDC and/or their physician has recommended they work remotely.

**Q: How do I enroll in Remote Access?**

**A:** All employees are enabled to connect remotely. To connect, browse to the employee remote access portal <https://access.nmh.org> and login with your NM ID, password and Google Authenticator Token. If you do not have a Google authenticator Token please [submit this request to MyNM Service Center](#) to have one reissued. Detailed instructions for remote access and mobile email can be found on the [Information Services section of NMI](#).

**Q: If I am working from home, how do I comply with HIPAA and related privacy, security and confidentiality laws, regulations and NM policies?**

**A:** While working from home, employees should continue to comply with all patient privacy and security laws and regulations and Northwestern Medicine’s privacy, security and confidentiality policies. Please use the following guidelines when dealing with any protected patient information or confidential business information.

### **Paper Documents**

- Take an inventory of documents so you can confirm all are returned when back in the office.
- Transport the documents securely in a large sealed envelope, secured bag or box.
- Ensure that all private and confidential documents are stored or maintained in a separate and secure area of your home.
- Do not allow other family members access or ability to view documents. Keep paper turned over and not in plain view of other household members.
- When not in use, secure documents in a lockable drawer or container.
- All paper documents must be disposed of in a secured HIPAA shredding bin at a Northwestern Medicine location. **DO NOT throw them away or shred them at home.**

### **Mobile/Telephone Usage**

- When discussing private and confidential information, calls should be held in a separate location where information is not disclosed to others within your household. Use earbuds/headphones if necessary.
- Do not allow other household members to use your mobile phone when outlook (e-mail) or other NM applications are open.

### **Computer Use**

All employees are able to connect remotely to the NM Network.

Personal (non-NM) Device: To connect from non-NM device, browse to the employee remote access portal <https://access.nmh.org> and log in with your NM ID, password and Google Authenticator Token.

- If you do not have a Google Authenticator Token please [submit a request to the MyNM Service Center](#) to have one issued.
- If you use a personal computer to remotely connect to the NM network, in addition to the instructions above, please ensure virus protection software, personal firewall and security patch levels are actively running and current.
- Downloading or saving PHI/confidential information is strictly prohibited.

NM-Issued Device: Detailed instructions on how to connect from an NM laptop or use mobile email from your smartphone can be found on the [Information Services section of NMI](#).

### **Usage**

- Use your computer in a separate and private location.
- Ensure other household members cannot view private and confidential information; use a privacy screen if available.
- Lock your computer when not in your use, even for short periods.
- Log off of the VPN remote access when you are done working.
- Do not allow other household members to use your device when it is connected to the NM Network.
- Avoid public WiFi or public internet access. If you must connect to public access, use a virtual private network (VPN) or a personal mobile hotspot. If you have an NM device, Cisco AnyConnect is the VPN of choice and available for all business connections.

## **Printing**

- Printing of any private or confidential NM information is generally prohibited while working from home and will only be allowed on a case-by-case basis in extreme situations.
- All requests to print NM information from home must be submitted to [COVID Work from Home Equipment Request](#). A business justification must be provided explaining why printing is necessary and no other alternatives are available.
- All requests will be reviewed by IT and Corporate Compliance and Integrity.

## **Data Storage/Safety**

- Do not store or download any private or confidential information on your NM device desktop, personal accounts (google drive, Dropbox etc.) or personal computer. All documents must be stored on an NM network server.
- If your computer is stolen, damaged or appears compromised in any manner please submit a [Security Incident Form](#).

## **Other Privacy, Security and Confidentiality Reminders**

### **Access to Patient Records**

- As always, access to patient records and any protected information must only be done when necessary to complete your job duties and must be the minimal amount of information needed.
- NM continually monitors inappropriate access to patient records.
- As a reminder, you are not authorized to access the records of family or friends, even your minor children, spouses, or those who give you permission.

### **Social Media**

- All privacy and confidentiality rules and policies apply to any comments you make within the community or post on any social media platform. Do not post any private or confidential information you have obtained through your relationship with NM, even if you feel that it does not identify a patient. You cannot control what others who hear your comments or view your social media posts know and whether they would be able to identify a patient.
- Any comments made on social media should note to be that of your own opinion and not on behalf of NM.
- Employees are not authorized to speak on behalf of NM and all statements must be made through the department of Media Relations.

### **Email**

- Do not email private or confidential information outside of NM, unless such email is necessary for your job duties and is encrypted. Follow the guidelines posted on the [Information Services – Email](#) section of NMI to encrypt email messages sent outside of NM.
- Please be cautious of phishing attempts and report any suspected attempts. Use the “Report Phish” button on Outlook to report suspicious email messages. Detailed instructions can be found [on NMI](#).

**Q: What if I am an employee who usually works from home?**

**A:** Employees who work from home who contract COVID-19 may be eligible for FML or another NM sickleave program. Employees who work from home and are under monitoring for COVID-19 exposure may continue to work from home.

**Q: If I am required to be away from work for self-monitoring, may I work from home instead of using PTO or sick accruals or being unpaid?**

**A:** If you are out for self-monitoring, your vice president (VP) will have discretion to determine whether a temporary remote work arrangement is appropriate based on the circumstances and the needs of your department. Employees should communicate with their manager by phone or email who will then work with their VP to determine if there is an appropriate work-from-home arrangement. You will be expected to return to work after the self-monitoring period ends.

**Q: Will I be eligible for additional paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act?**

**A:** Not at this time. The current version of the Act applies only to those who work at companies with less than 500 employees. NM employs more than 30,000 people, so our staff are not eligible for these emergency funds. This bill has not been finalized and is subject to change. We will provide updates as appropriate. Please reference the FAQ on staying home for COVID-19 related reasons if you have other questions.

**TRAVEL**

**Q: What if I have NM-sponsored travel scheduled, such as a conference? Can I still attend?**

**A:** Subject to change as the situation warrants, until April 15, all NM-sponsored international and domestic travel is cancelled. Please do not submit any new applications for events that require travel during this timeframe, as you will not be reimbursed. If you have prepaid your conference fees and/or airfare or hotel deposit, reach out to the event organizer/airline/hotel and request a refund. If the organizer or vendor denies your request for a refund, request documentation to that effect. Contact the Service Center at 312.926.HELP (4357) or [MyNMservicecenter@nm.org](mailto:MyNMservicecenter@nm.org) for instructions on submitting the documentation for a refund. Attendance at local business-related events will be up to the discretion of the manager. As part of the EdAssist application, employees may be required to provide documentation to indicate that the event is local. Employees are encouraged to inquire about remote attendance options.

**Q: I am planning an upcoming vacation. What is NM's policy on personal travel?**

**A:** NM employees are strongly encouraged to postpone personal travel to areas designated Level 3 for COVID-19. Before planning personal travel, review the list of Level 3 areas and access travel guidance from the CDC at [cdc.gov/travel/notices](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/notices). Please notify your manager if you have plans to travel to any of the areas on the CDC travel advisory list so that NM can ensure a safe environment for patients and staff upon your return. If you plan to travel for personal reasons, monitor the CDC site to understand the situations when you may be required to stay at home upon your return.

**UPDATE Q: Can I come to work if I have recently traveled to areas with a known outbreak?**

**A:** No. If you have recently traveled to an area with widespread transmission (Level 3 Travel Health Notice from the CDC), you should stay at home for a period of 14 days from the time you left that

area as directed by Public Health and the CDC. Learn more at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>. If a physician or staff member travels to an identified hotspot such as the New York City metropolitan area they should contact COVID-19 hotline 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843) prior to returning to work at NM in order to determine whether they will be required to self-isolate or take other special precautions for the safety of their colleagues and our patients. If you need to stay home upon your return, this time will be covered by your remaining PTO/sick time. If you do not have enough PTO/sick time, then your time will be unpaid.

## **PAY PRACTICES, ATTENDANCE AND OTHER HR TOPICS FAQs**

**Q: I am available to work in other capacities to help our patients and my colleagues. How do I sign up?**

**A:** Given the growing demands across the Northwestern Medicine system and as we have done with previous efforts such as Project One, we are asking employees and physicians if they are able to satisfy staffing needs outside of their location.

- This link to the [Labor Pool Staffing Form](#) takes you to a short survey form in which you can indicate your availability.
- NM has created a separate Labor Pool form for physicians and advanced practice nurses, Physician/APP Volunteer Staffing Survey, with additional details requested. If you are a physician or APN please complete [this separate survey](#).
- Click the following links for guides on how to transfer an employee's time at the clock and in Kronos.
  - [Kronos Department Transfer Clock Instructions](#)
  - [Kronos & Payroll](#)

As with the staff survey, accessing the form outside of the NM network may require verification code authentication.

Each location has its own staffing efforts underway. These survey responses will be used to supplement and enhance local efforts.

**NEW Q: I am an active member of the military. If I am mobilized during the COVID crisis, am I required to report or will NM provide a letter supporting my request for an exemption?**

**A:** In general, when an employee receives mobilization orders they are required to report. However, under the Code of Federal Regulations, some employees may be exempted due to extreme community hardship. An extreme community hardship is a situation that, due to a reservist's mobilization, may have a substantially adverse effect on the health, safety, or welfare of the community. An employee who receives orders should bring the letter to their manager for consultation with HR on whether a request for a hardship determination should be submitted.

**NEW Q: I have seen calls for healthcare workers to volunteer at McCormick Place and to staff other hospitals and regions. Is there any limitation on my ability to work elsewhere?**

**A:** Northwestern Medicine expects a continuing volume of COVID-19 patients across our system and has established local labor pools and a system float pool to address those patient care needs. In order to effectively serve patients and support colleagues, employees should work with their managers and the local and system labor pools to ensure that all NM staffing needs are met prior to volunteering or

working elsewhere. NM does not provide professional liability coverage for any outside clinical work. NM will not approve PTO or a Leave of Absence for anyone working elsewhere unless the applicable vice president has confirmed there are no NM staffing needs for the period requested for the individual. In addition, staff will not receive low-census pay while working elsewhere.

If an employee travels to an identified hotspot such as the New York City metropolitan area they should contact the COVID-19 hotline 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843) prior to returning to work at NM in order to determine whether they will be required to self-isolate or take other special precautions for the safety of their colleagues and our patients.

**NEW Q: I have seen calls for physicians to volunteer at McCormick Place and to staff other hospitals and areas of the country. Is there any limitation on my ability to work elsewhere?**

**A:** Northwestern Medicine expects a continuing volume of COVID-19 patients across our system and has established a physician float pool to address our patient care needs. In order to effectively serve patients and support colleagues, physicians should work with their department administrator or director of operations to ensure that all NM staffing needs are met prior to requesting approval to volunteer or otherwise work outside of our health system.

Physicians who have employment agreements with NMG or RMG are not permitted to work outside of NM unless there is a specific exception in the employment agreement or unless approved by the president of NMG or RMG. This practice restriction does not apply to casual physician employees. Physicians must demonstrate proof of professional liability coverage for any outside clinical work when seeking approval, as NM does not provide such coverage for work outside of our health system. While NM historically has supported physicians providing volunteer activities, engagement in those activities also requires approval of the president of NMG or RMG and no insurance coverage is provided. Under the recently enacted CARES Act, there is a limitation of liability provision offered to physicians who provide volunteer services during the COVID-19 emergency response. However, in order to effectively serve our patients and to fulfill obligations under the physician employment agreements, NM reserves the right to recall a physician at any time.

If a physician travels to an identified hotspot such as the New York City metropolitan area, they should contact the COVID-19 hotline 312.47.COVID (312.472.6843) prior to returning to work at NM in order to determine whether they will be required to self-isolate or take other special precautions for the safety of their colleagues and our patients.

**Q: How can the EAP assist during the COVID-19 crisis?**

**A:** NM's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is always available for employees in need. The EAP can assist as our workforce deals with COVID-19 by providing services such as dealing with adverse events, navigating childcare, supporting those struggling with anxiety or substance abuse and offering financial and legal advice.

- To schedule a phone or videoconference appointment with an EAP counselor, call 800.456.6327 anytime or e-mail [info@perspectivesltd.com](mailto:info@perspectivesltd.com). Please include your name, home address, phone number, birth date and job title in the email.
- Live chat options are also available.
- Please view [this flyer](#) or [NMI](#).

**Q: Is Metra providing discounts on travel during the Shelter-in-Place period?**

**A:** Yes. Metra announced on March 23 that it would provide free ridership to those employed by a hospital, doctor's office, medical facility or local fire department through the Shelter-in-Place order period, ending April 7, 2020. Riders need to present a current work ID to a Metra conductor.

**Q: How do I cancel my monthly transit pass (Metra, NM Shuttle, CTA/Ventra) I purchased using the Commuter Pretax benefit? Since I missed the March 10 deadline to cancel my April pass from ConnectYourCare, can I get a refund?**

**A:** IRS Guidelines do not allow refunds of transit products purchased with pre-tax deductions. At this time, that rule has not changed. However, you can get a credit on both your Metra and NM Shuttle Bus April passes, which will be applied as a credit to a future month's order. If you have a recurring monthly order, the credit will automatically apply to the month after your credit is processed.

NM Shuttle

In order to receive a credit, your April monthly shuttle passes must be **received** by **April 5** to qualify for a credit for a future month purchase.

Metra

Due to the short timeframe of this announcement, Metra extended the timeframe to return your pass. Metra passes must **postmarked** by **April 10** to receive a full credit. Passes postmarked after April 10 will not receive a credit.

Please mail your NM Shuttle and/or Metra pass via **US Postal Service only** to the address below:  
Customer Service- Refunds  
PO Box 540515  
Waltham, MA 02454

A tracking number is suggested and the fulfillment letter or reference number (from your email confirming your order) should be included to identify the pass. Employees should not send their passes via FedEx or UPS.

Chicago Ventra Card

Ventra recently issued a broad communication stating that deposits to the 30-Day Ventra Pass could be stopped by contacting your employer. Unfortunately, that direction is not accurate in regard to passes purchased via a pre-tax deductions.

Pre-tax administration under the NM plan enables employees to make changes to their recurring orders prior to the **10th of each month**. Per IRS guidelines, refunds are not allowed for a pre-tax transit purchase. However, you can contact Ventra Customer Service [beginning March 27](#) to request your pre-purchased 30-day pass for April be converted to a credit onto your Ventra card. Ventra Customer Service can be reached at 877.NOW.VENTRA (877.669.8368) Monday through Friday from 6 am to 8 pm and Saturday from 8:30 am to 5 pm.

**Q: Are there discounted hotel rates for NM staff and Physicians?**

**A:** Yes. NM has negotiated discounted rates at hotels in **all** regions. [Click here](#) for more information. Note that all discounted rates are subject to change.

**Q: Are there discounted parking rates for NM staff and physicians?**

**A:** Yes. NM has negotiated discounted rates at **downtown** parking garages. [Click here](#) for more information. Note that all discounted rates are subject to change.

**Q: I am reaching my PTO accrual maximum. If I am unable to take PTO at this time, will I forfeit my PTO accruals above the maximum?**

**A:** NM will allow you to go above your PTO maximum thru August 31, 2020. You may use accrued PTO above your maximum through that time. Any accrued amounts above the maximum at the end of the fiscal year will be paid out. Regular PTO maximums will resume at the beginning of the new fiscal year starting on September 1, 2020.

**Q: I am a union member and reaching my vacation accrual maximum. If I am unable to take vacation at this time, will I forfeit my vacation accruals above the maximum?**

**A:** NM will allow you to go above your vacation maximum through August 31, 2020. You may use accrued vacation above your maximum through that time. Any accrued amounts above the maximum at the end of the fiscal year will be paid out. Regular vacation maximums will resume at the beginning of the new fiscal year starting on September 1, 2020.

**Q: What if I need to stay home for a non-work related COVID-19 reason such as monitoring or child/family care, but have little or no sick or PTO accruals?**

**A:** Through April 15, if you need to stay home for a non-work related COVID-19 reason and do not have enough accruals to cover your time off, NM will allow you to go into a negative status on your PTO or sick bank accruals to ensure you will be paid for up to two weeks of time off. As you subsequently begin to accrue time, your PTO/sick bank will be replenished. If your PTO bank goes into a negative status, your manager will code your timecard. You may be required to provide documentation to support your absence not related to childcare. Please note that the waiting period for new hires to use PTO or sick bank accruals will be waived during the COVID-19 crisis period.

**Q: How will I get paid if I test positive due to a non-work-related exposure for COVID-19 and must be off work?**

**A:** If an individual tests positive due to exposure outside of work, they may apply for FML (Family and Medical Leave) if eligible, or NM Medical, and receive short term disability supplemented by PTO or extended illness bank (for non-union employees). If not eligible for STIIP (short term illness and injury plan), individuals will be placed on a personal leave of absence and will have the choice of using PTO/sick/vacation or taking the time unpaid. There will be no attendance policy implications.

**Q: How will I get paid if I test positive, it is determined to be a workplace exposure for COVID-19 and I must be off work?**

**A:** If you test positive for COVID-19 due to exposure at work, you will be paid through the NM workers' compensation program. There will not be any attendance policy implications if you test positive for the virus due to exposure at work.



**Q: Who will code my timecards in Kronos if I have been exposed to COVID-19 and am off work? A:**

- For work-related exposures, the Human Resources team will code the timecards in Kronos for Workers' Comp or Short-Term Disability and PTO, EIB or Sick Pay.
- If it is a non-work-related exposure, then the manager will code the timecard in Kronos for PTO or Sick Pay.

**Q: Will I still get paid if I am exposed to an individual outside of work who tested positive for COVID-19 and must remain off work during the self-monitoring period?**

**A:** An individual who may have been exposed outside of work will be requested to self-monitor for 14 days and will have the choice of using PTO/sick/vacation, or taking the time unpaid. Appropriate documentation may be required to support the absence. Managers have discretion to determine whether flexible work arrangements are appropriate based on the individual's role.

**Q: Are flu shots continuing?**

**A:** While we usually discontinue flu vaccinations at the end of March, given the current pattern of illness, vaccinations will continue for patients and new employees.

## **CHILDCARE FAQs**

*Northwestern Medicine is not affiliated with or sponsoring childcare programming outside of the Bright Horizons centers in Lake Forest, Streeterville and McHenry, and is not responsible for any events at other external facilities. However, during this time, staff may be in need of child care options, and NM seeks to make available known resources.*

**Q: Does NM have childcare options?**

**A:** Effective Monday, March 16, the Bernice E. Lavin Early Childhood Education Center and the McHenry Hospital Childcare Center will open their School Age camps. As with the regular 'School's Out' days, the centers will be open from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The following conditions must be met:

1. Child has not been exposed to COVID-19 nor exposed to others with symptoms of COVID
2. Has not traveled to a CDC-designated Level 3 country

If your child meets these conditions, you may be required to complete paperwork. The requirements and forms are available at <http://enroll.brighthorizons.com>.

Care is limited by the size of the classrooms and registration is managed by the centers. Questions about the center or program availability should be directed to the centers.

- Bernice E. Lavin Childhood Education Center – 312.926.5437
- McHenry Hospital Childcare Center – 815.363.2356

**Q: Now that the Park District has closed, are there other options in the Central Region?**

**A:** In partnership with the City of Chicago, Sittercity is providing all Chicago parents working as a first responder free access to Sittercity Premium as part of its "Chicago Responds" program. The program will connect city employees and other members of the public with the families of first responders, so they can volunteer to provide free child care right in your home. You can sign up to take advantage of this program here: [www.sittercity.com/chicagoresponds](http://www.sittercity.com/chicagoresponds)

Based in Chicago, Sittercity has been digitally connecting families with quality child care since 2001. Sittercity is working to support your family during this unprecedented time. They provide tools to help families build a child care support network with ease including:

- Detailed Profiles
- Secure Messaging
- Interview Scheduling
- Background Check Options

**Q: What childcare options exist in the West Region?**

**A:** Tri-Town YMCA in the Glen Ellyn/Lombard/Villa Park area is in the process of operationalizing emergency childcare sites for children ages 5-12 dedicated to support parents who must report to work for essential positions. Programs will run from approximately 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, and will include games, activities, crafts, movies, and time for participants to work on homework and e-learning activities. All participants will be provided with a morning and afternoon non-peanut snack. Children should bring their own lunch and a water bottle. Lunches must be peanut-free and should follow healthy eating guidelines. Staff supporting the programs will be adults who have completed background checks, are certified in CPR and first aid, and have prior experience in the YMCA youth programs or from a teaching/childcare setting.

The Tri-Town YMCA has established tight protocols with regards to access to the centers and healthcare screening of both parents and children to ensure a healthy environment. If you have questions, need more information or want to register for this service please email [emergencychildcare@tritownymca.org](mailto:emergencychildcare@tritownymca.org) or call 630.629.9622 between 9 am and 6 pm.

**Q: What childcare options exist in the Northwest Region?**

**A:** In partnership with local childcare providers, Community Unit School District 300 is exploring emergency childcare sites for children who are in kindergarten through eighth grade, dedicated to support parents who must report to work for essential positions. Launch of the program and its hours will depend on interest and need. Programs will include games, activities, crafts, movies and time for participants to work on homework and e-learning activities. The childcare sites will require stringent protocols with regards to access to the centers and healthcare screening of both parents and children to ensure a healthy environment. If you are interested in this program, please email [D300Wellness@d300.org](mailto:D300Wellness@d300.org).