



Milwaukee Area Compensation Association

Virtual Roundtable – 2

Covid-19 from a Benefits / Compensation Perspective

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World@Work Webcast: Innoculating your HR Policy

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What should employers be looking at to be proactive with the Coronavirus situation?

- **Implement “special emergency leave pay” or other temporary pay policies**
 - Example: Starbucks
 - Put “Service Pay” into place – giving an additional \$3/hr for employees willing to come in and work
 - Also, “Catastrophic Pay” - they are paying employees for 30 days whether they choose to come to work or stay home
- **Adjusting paid time off/leave policies**
 - Look at policies to ensure they are consistent with recent federal/state guidelines that are being put into place
 - Waive attendance penalties if an employee does not come in when sick
 - Waive waiting period for leave eligibility – either federal/state laws or employer’s policy
 - Create a policy specific for a pandemic situation to allow all employees to take leave if they are or a family member are ill
 - Remove restrictions on using PTO/sick time temporarily so employees are not worried about income continuation and don’t come in sick
 - Expand PTO/sick leave policies – “gift” of paid leave time or allowing employees to borrow against future time

What should employers be looking at to be proactive with the Coronavirus situation?

- **Health and welfare issues for employer sponsored health and welfare plans**
 - Recent federal action now requires testing Covid-19 be covered under public and private health plans
 - May have copays or deductions but some states are requesting/requiring these be waived by health plans
 - Look at plan documents to review the time period in place for making premium payments for employees no longer working
 - Start conversations about “advancing” premium payments for employees who cannot pay
 - Understand that if no change is made, coverage may lapse for employees who are unable to pay
- **Incentive Plans**
 - Incentive plans may be a low priority for employers right now but they should not let them sit – be proactive!
 - Start looking at STI plans and the impact they’ll see. Should look at the future state of the business and decide whether a contingency plan is needed – are the measures going to be met or should they make adjustments?
 - These will be important to employees
 - Sales compensation plans will need to be addressed immediately as they are frequently based on monthly or quarterly measures that will likely be impacted now
- **Wellness Initiatives**
 - Promote telehealth services
 - Communication on good hygiene/disease prevention in the workplace
 - Be creative and engaging – trivia contest, lunch & learn
 - Touch-free work environment
 - No handshakes or fist bumps – perhaps elbow or ankle bumps
 - Make appropriate signage available – wash hands/how long, etc.
 - Make antibacterial wipes readily available

What should employers be looking at to be proactive with the Coronavirus situation?

- **Disability Discrimination Implications**

- Avoid fear-induced reactions (example: someone sneezes on a plane, another passenger freaked out, they had to divert the plane)
- Employer can require an employee stay home if they have cough/fever/other symptoms
- Taking temperature at start of shift
 - Could create ADA issues; only seen as acceptable if “job-related” or if employer is in a “containment zone” or area of known community spread
 - Example: Senior Living Retirement Community – serving “at-risk community” and could be considered a “direct threat”
- Ok for employer to require employee to self-quarantine for 14 days after return from trip
 - Can ask where they were, were they exposed to Covid-19, etc.
 - This can be unpaid

- **Disseminating Information on Employee Covid-19 Exposure or Diagnosis**

- ADA allows some but not a lot of information
 - Can make general statement that someone within the employer has been exposed or has contracted Covid-19
 - Cannot give names
 - May ask reason for an employee’s absence after 3 days but confidentiality rules still apply
- When returning to work, be aware that a fitness-for-duty certification may be difficult to get
 - Doctors and health professionals may not have time to complete the certification
 - Consider being flexible on who can complete the certification and/or what information the certification needs to provide

What should employers be looking at to be proactive with the Coronavirus situation?

- **How to overcome the fear from “Infodemic” – too much information, don’t know who to trust, what is factual?**
 - Use government websites, CDC or WHO for the best access to good information
 - Refrain from sending out fear-inducing communications
 - Get out in front of issues and address them with clear, simple, engaging communication with employees
- **Realize this pandemic is causing legal, business and human issues. Human issues will likely eclipse all other issues and businesses should do what is needed to make sure their employees are taken care of.**



World@Work Resources

World@Work Articles

- Reimagining the World at Work
- Weekly Roundup: What Employers Are Doing to Contend with COVID-19
- Large Employers Broadening Support for Employees Amid COVID-19 Outbreak
- U.S. Government Provides Exception for Remote I-9 Document Review
- Senate Passes Coronavirus Package that Includes Paid Leave Mandate
- Benefits Insider: Coronavirus Update (American Benefits Council)
- IRS to Provide Temporary Relief for HDHPs Covering COVID-19 Health Services
- COVID-19: Should You Protect Sellers' Pay?
- How the Coronavirus Is Forcing Organizations to Better Prepare for the Future
- What Employers Are Doing to Contend with COVID-19
- Business Not as Usual: Time to Re-Evaluate Your Comp and Benefits Policies
- Turbulent Times: Purpose, Certainty and Sustainability During COVID-19
- A 10-Step Approach for Organizations Responding to Coronavirus
- Multinational Employers and the Coronavirus Outbreak: What to Do
- Protecting Your Most Important Asset During Disaster: Your Employees
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Pandemic Flu Guide for Individuals and Families

World@Work Webcasts

Expert Insights: Sales Compensation and COVID-19 - Should you make changes? When? How?
Webcast from this morning

Expert Insights: COVID-19 and Other Employee Benefits Public Policy Issues You Need to Know
Webcast - March 31, 2020, 11:00 to 12:30 p.m. Central



Other Questions

Comments

- Some organizations are doing furloughs (continuing benefits and not contesting unemployment)
- Not many on the call were considering reductions in pay or layoffs
- Many on call concerned with how businesses will weather the storm
- Some considering paying a premium to those coming in to work
- For those companies who were reticent to adapt to remote workforces, they are now being forced to adapt. We wonder what will happen when things return to “regular”. Will those employees still want to work from home? Will the company let them?
 - Could be decent cost savings to more remote work (less facility cost, commutes, child care, work clothes, etc.)

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