

MEDICAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

MED-1 Occupational Health Services

March 11, 2020



COVID-19 is a new and incompletely understood virus that is in the same virus family as “colds” as well as “SARS.” We will fear less what we understand better.

Laboratory testing by American standards is still sparse, but rapidly expanding. We will have better predictions and projections as laboratory testing becomes more available in the coming weeks, and as US physicians gain experience in treating this disease.

There is no antidote or proven medications for treatment of COVID-19. There are treatment medications in Phase 2 trials. We are hopeful that a vaccine in development will work out.

The goal should be to protect the work environment for the people you work with as well as your own personal space. Do not allow co-workers with fever and/or coughing to work or have presence in the workplace environment. These employees should be sent home. Ill individuals with “flu like” symptoms should self-treat at home, isolating themselves from family members. If they have trouble breathing and/or become short of breath, they should call their Primary Care Provider for advice. Currently, the only place that COVID-19 can be diagnosed is in hospitals that have an active Emergency Department. However, that is only for the seriously ill and compromised.

Our challenge is to change our collective culture about disease spread. Our society can be quite lackadaisical about paying attention. COVID-19 apparently cannot be distinguished, even by physicians, from other common upper and lower respiratory infections. Therefore, to lessen the overall impact to our businesses and society as a whole, we need to immediately start being diligent that co-workers with illness, fever, and/or cough should not be allowed to cohabitate our respective environment and share the same air (blunt and accurate). These people should “wait it out” at home, starting now.

The governor of MI has said today that we now have confirmed cases in Michigan. This is not a surprise. The number of cases will soon begin to rise daily. It is easily transmitted person to person and the transmission rate is higher than influenza. Now, we must begin common sense social distancing.

Again, if you are ill with a respiratory type infection, stay home and wait it out.

Our source for authority is the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Health.