Coronavirus/COVID-19: Communication Tools for Your Customers, Employees and Leadership Teams

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Current Situation

- **Influenza Epidemic** - Types A/B are actively circulating in the USA
  - CDC estimates that so far this season there have been at least 34 million flu illnesses, 350,000 hospitalizations and 20,000 deaths from flu in the USA

- **COVID-19 “Pandemic”**
  - As of 3/09/2020, +113,000 cases and +4000 confirmed
  - +100 countries laboratory-confirmed cases
How Do New Pathogens Emerge?

- Existing benign animal pathogens “jump” to humans → followed by human-to-human spread in immunologically naïve populations
- Existing benign animal pathogens co-mingle and mutate with human pathogens
- Normal Mutation → New strains of existing pathogens
- Normal Mutation → New pathogens
- Normal human biome → Opportunistic infections → Ab resistant organisms → Human-to-human spread
- Note: Viruses can undergo a half million generations in the span of our one generation!
What is a Coronavirus?

- Named for their crown-like spikes on their surfaces
- The coronavirus family causes multiple respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses, most of which are not severe.
- Some like COVID-2019, SARS, and MERS cause more severe illnesses.
- **COVID-19 is the “Real Deal”**
- Comparison of Case Fatality Rates:
  - Influenza = 0.2%
  - COVID-19 = 2% - 4%
  - SARS = 11% (UP TO 50% IN SOME AGE GROUPS!)
  - MERS = 30-40%
COVID-19 Course of Severe Infection

- **Phase 1**: Viral Replication (may be asymptomatic but elevated temperature is the leading indicator)

- **Phase 2**: Immune System Hyper-Reactivity (Cytokine Storm)

- **Phase 3**: Pulmonary Destruction (Honeycomb Effect)

- **Phase 4**: Respiratory Failure (holes fill with fluid)
How Does COVID-19 Spread?

- Droplet - Confirmed
- Aerosol - Confirmed
- Fecal-Oral - Confirmed in patient stool samples
- Bloodborne - Confirmed in patient blood samples

*Multiple pathways and long latency period (14 days) may explain its high communicability*
Masks for Healthcare Workers
How Effective Are “Masks”? 

WHEN TO USE A MASK

For healthy people wear a mask only if you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection

Wear a mask, if you are coughing or sneezing

Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

If you wear a mask then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly
Hospitals Can Amplify Epidemics But Can Also End Them

- **SARS 2003** - Three Hospital Outbreaks:
  - TTSH, Singapore
  - Sunnybrook, Toronto, Ca
  - Prince of Wales, Hong Kong

- **MERS 2015** - May 20, 2015 - 1 Korean from Saudi Arabia
  Next 2 months 186 confirmed cases, 36 deaths
  16,692 people were quarantined

- **MERS Saudi Arabia 2015** - 9 healthcare workers out of 39 MERS-CoV patients in Wadi ad-Dawasir, Saudi Arabia

- **COVID-19** - More than 40 percent of cases thought to have picked up COVID-19 at the hospital
Superspreaders Are the Cause of Illness Outbreaks

Superspreader = 1 person sickens 10 or more people
Persons with sub-acute fever can shed virus
What Does the Future Hold?
COVID-19
Communicating with employees

CATALINA DONGO
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, UNIFIRST CORPORATION
Crisis Response Team:

Cross-functional team
- Operations
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- Risk Management

Regular communication and collaboration
Equip Managers:

Hold informational or training sessions for managers
◦ Educated them and share resources
◦ Provide clear, actionable guidelines for communicating with employees
◦ Provide a point of contact for questions and potential cases
◦ Balance responsible action without creating panic

Some OSHA requirements may apply to preventing occupational exposure to COVID-19:
◦ **COVID-19 may be a recordable illness** when a worker is infected on the job.
Educate Employees:

General education regarding COVID-19

- Use only reliable sources for information and direct employees to these sources
- CDC, WHO, local health departments, TRSA, OSHA

Reassure employees that you are monitoring the situation, staying abreast, and following guidance from the CDC.
Good Hygiene:

Promote good hygiene

◦ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, if unable to wash, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers
◦ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
◦ Cover your coughs or sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not with your hands)
◦ Disinfect surfaces (phones, timeclocks, doorknobs/handles)
◦ Stay away from people who are sick
◦ Stay home when you are sick
Personal Protective Equipment:

Increase emphasis on proper use of PPE
- All Team Partners who have direct contact with soiled laundry should:
  - Wear proper PPE
  - Focus on handling product away from their mouth and face

Managers should proactively monitor and provide new PPE as needed
Reaching Employees:

Distribute literature
- Translate into employees language (CDC and TRSA provide English and Spanish literature)
- Post it in high traffic/visible areas
- Handouts and home mailings

Hold small huddles or meetings
- Allow employees to express concerns and take them seriously
- Make visible efforts in terms of cleanliness and PPE

Video messaging

Central repository (webpage) for information
Travel:

Level 3 - Widespread sustained (ongoing) transmission and restrictions on entry to the United States: China, Iran

Level 3 - Widespread sustained (ongoing) transmission: Italy, South Korea

Level 2 - Sustained (ongoing) community transmission: Japan

Level 1 - Risk of limited community transmission Hong Kong
Travel:

At UniFirst, we have restricted all non-essential business travel to Europe and Asia as a precautionary measure and will continue to evaluate and modify restrictions accordingly.

Employees returning from travel to any level 1-3 countries are being asked to stay home for 14 days, or as recommended by the CDC.

Employees returning from any other travel (national or international) are being asked to self monitor and report any flu like symptoms immediately.

Be ready to adopt measures as new developments occur.
Meetings and Events:

At UniFirst, we have not canceled any meetings or events.

We have asked that no new large meetings or events be scheduled until further notice, unless approved by senior leadership.

Encouraging all employees to leverage technology as much as possible to replace in-person meetings.

Promote greetings that minimize contact such as virtual high-fives or virtual fist bumps, elbow bumps or bows.
Attendance and Leave policies:

Allow employees to choose PTO/Sick Leave/Vacation pay if being asked to stay home
Absences related to COVID-19 will not count against attendance
FMLA, ADA, and local leave laws may apply
Work closely with HR and Safety teams to ensure consistent application and interpretation
Coronavirus/COVID-19: Communication Tools for Your Customers, Employees and Leadership Teams
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CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

• Educate all employees about how the coronavirus can be contracted.

• Establish a point of contact in human resources or elsewhere in your company for employees that have concerns.

• Remind employees about policies concerning absences and working from home, including vacation, sick pay, FMLA, and short term disability.

• Train supervisors on overreaction impacts and importance of adhering to antidiscrimination policies.

• Keep track of updates from CDC and WHO.

• Employee personal travel:
  Employers cannot prohibit otherwise legal activity, such as personal travel abroad by an employee. This includes pregnant employees or those with a medical condition.
  Employers should advise employees traveling to areas where Coronavirus is an issue to take proper precautions.
CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

Plan for business interruptions; have a plan in place to have employees working from home.

Educate your supply chain.

Attempt to schedule more teleconferences in lieu of travel.

Can you ask employees to stay at home if they exhibit symptoms of coronavirus or the flu? Yes. Ask them to seek medical attention and get tested for COVID-19.

Can you ask an employee why he or she missed work? Yes. Can you ask them to leave work? Yes, under most circumstances.

Many clients are requesting medical notes from employees prior to returning to work, especially if that was a prior practice.
MASKING THE PROBLEM?

• Under OSHA’s respiratory protection standard, a respirator must be provided to employees only “when such equipment is necessary to protect the health of such employees.”

• OSHA rules provide guidance on when a respirator is not required: “an employer may provide respirators at the request of employees or permit employees to use their own respirators, if the employer determines that such respirator use will not in itself create a hazard” (29 C.F.R. 1910.134(c)(2)).
The World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that people only need to wear face masks if they are treating someone who is infected with the coronavirus.

Doctors agree that the best defense is simply washing your hands.

There are more appropriate measures of defense than wearing a surgical mask or respirator.
MOST EMPLOYERS DO NOT HAVE TO ALLOW EMPLOYEES TO WEAR A MASK

• The consensus is face masks are only necessary when treating someone who is infected with the coronavirus.
  • So, masks are likely not necessary to protect the health of most employees.
• The use of the word “may” in OSHA’s respiratory protection standard makes it clear that when a respirator is not necessary to protect the health of employees, it is within the discretion of the employer to allow employees to use a respirator.
• Consider employee/labor relations issues.
CAN AN EMPLOYEE SIMPLY REFUSE TO WORK?

- An employee’s right to refuse to do a task is protected if all of the following conditions are met:
  - Where possible, you have asked the employer to eliminate the danger, and the employer failed to do so; and
  - You refused to work in “good faith.” This means that you must genuinely believe that an imminent danger exists; and
  - A reasonable person would agree that there is a real danger of death or serious injury; and
  - There isn’t enough time, due to the urgency of the hazard, to get it corrected through regular enforcement channels, such as requesting an OSHA inspection.
- At this point in the outbreak, the conditions are likely not met.
PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

• Encourage employees to wash their hands. Ensure that proper hand washing tools/soap is available.
• Educate your workforce.
• Allow employees to work from home if possible.
• Encourage employees to not return to work until their temperature drops below 100.4 Fahrenheit for at least 24 hours.
• Encourage employees to not touch their faces, eyes, and mouth.
• Increase custodial/sanitizing schedules to the extent possible.
• Encourage employees to contact a doctor if they develop symptoms of the coronavirus and be tested.
Thank You

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TRSA Resources

www.trsa.org/covid19/
TRSA Resources: For Your Leadership

Procedures from the CDC and OSHA for protecting employees and controlling the spread in workplaces of the virus; guidance from WHO, TRSA and other international laundry experts on processing potentially contaminated items.
TRSA Resources: For Your Employees

**COVID-19: What to Know and Do**

- **What can I do to stay healthy?**
  - Wear a mask in public spaces.
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **What if I have symptoms?**
  - Call your doctor.
  - Stay home if you have symptoms.
- **What is the latest on the virus?**
  - Check the news regularly for updates.

**How to Use Hand Sanitizer**

1. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
2. Apply a sufficient amount to cover all surfaces of your hands.
3. Rub your hands together until they are dry.
4. Keep a bottle close by for easy access.

**Wash Your Hands the Right Way**

1. Wet your hands with soap, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
3. Scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

- **For more information:**
  - washyourhands.gov
  - TRSA.org

**TRSA Resources: For Your Employees**

- Keep calm and wash your hands.
- TRSA - 1800 DIAGONAL ROAD, SUITE 200, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 – 877.770.9274 - TRSA.ORG
Members Only

Description of our industry’s capabilities for combating the presence of COVID-19 on textiles, highlighting readiness to continue serving customers in a large-scale outbreak.

The company that provides your washable textiles is a member of TRSA, the Association for the Linen, Uniform and Facility Services Industry. As members, the company is taking the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of our employees and our customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have developed a comprehensive plan to address the current health crisis and ensure the continued delivery of quality products and services. We have implemented the following measures:

- **Social Distancing:** Our employees are encouraged to maintain a safe distance from one another to prevent the spread of the virus.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** We provide PPE to all employees and mandate its use in accordance with local and national guidelines.
- **Regular Cleaning and Disinfecting:** Our facilities are cleaned and disinfected regularly to reduce the risk of transmission.
- **Remote Work:** Where possible, we have implemented remote work arrangements to minimize the number of employees on-site.
- **Remote Meetings:** We have transitioned to digital meetings where possible to reduce the need for in-person gatherings.
- **Hygiene Practices:** We have reinforced the importance of handwashing, sanitization, and the use of face masks.
- **Mandatory Training:** Our employees undergo regular training on COVID-19 prevention measures.

Specific steps TRSA has taken to combat COVID-19 include:

- **Social Distancing:** We have implemented strict social distancing measures to ensure the safety of our employees and customers.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** In addition to our employees wearing masks, we provide PPE to our customers when necessary.
- **Regular Cleaning and Disinfecting:** Our facilities are cleaned and disinfected multiple times a day.
- **Remote Work:** We have encouraged remote work where possible to reduce the number of people on-site.
- **Remote Meetings:** We have transitioned to virtual meetings where possible to avoid large gatherings.
- **Hygiene Practices:** We have reinforced the importance of handwashing, sanitization, and the use of face masks.
- **Mandatory Training:** Our employees undergo regular training on COVID-19 prevention measures.

These measures are designed to provide a safe and healthy environment for our employees and customers, ensuring the continued delivery of high-quality products and services.

TRSA Resources: For Your Customers

TRSA Resources is a comprehensive online platform offering members-only resources for the linen, uniform, and facility services industry. Our resources are designed to help members navigate the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visit our website at TRSA.ORG to access our resources.

TRSA - 1800 DIAGONAL ROAD, SUITE 200, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 – 877.770.9274 - TRSA.ORG
Thank you!

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www.trsa.org/covid19/
TRSA’s On-Demand Learning!

We offer more than 100 industry-specific professional development and training programs on a range of issues including emerging regulatory/compliance issues, safety best practices and strategies for enhancing productivity.

Go to www.trsa.org and under the menu for Professional Development select On-Demand Learning. Select a category you are interested in to view the available programs.

- Free unlimited access to recorded webinars for TRSA members
- Preview content before you buy
- “Stop & Start” feature allows you to pick up where you left off
- Purchases are stored in “My Classroom” for quick and easy access
- Earn CPLM Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits
On-Demand Learning

TRSA's On-demand Learning Portal offers over 100 industry-specific professional development and training webinars, videos and e-learning courses on a range of issues including emerging regulatory/compliance issues, safety best practices and strategies for enhancing productivity. And the best part is, all of the training is available at your convenience!!!

- Free unlimited access to on-demand webinars and training videos for TRSA members
- View video previews before purchasing
- "Stop & Start" feature allows you to pick up where you left off
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- Earn CPLE Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Credits

Subscriptions:
If you would like to purchase a subscription for your company or colleagues, Please click here to proceed.
Non-members interested in purchasing an all-access pass to the full library of on-demand content should email lrhudd@trsa.org.

Select a category to see the available programs

- Complimentary Programs (10 Programs)
- Customer Service (6 Programs)
- Interactive Online Courses (2 Programs)
- Environmental (4 Programs)
- Human Resources (30 Programs)
- Leadership/Management (16 Programs)
- Operations/Maintenance (21 Programs)
- Production Training Videos (4 Programs)
- Regulatory/Compliance (15 Programs)
- Routes/Logistics and Transportation (5 Programs)
- Safety & Health Care (38 Programs)
- Sales/Marketing (24 Programs)
- TRSA Certifications (7 Programs)
- TRSA Core Curriculum Certificate Program (1 Program)