

From: Tsai, Daniel (EHS)
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2020 10:14 AM
To: HHS State Employees
Subject: A Message from Deputy Secretary Dan Tsai

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of Secretary Sudders, I want to thank you all for your incredible public service and dedication during this public health crisis. The importance of the work you all do in Health and Human Services takes on a new meaning in times like these.

Over the past several days, you have seen the Governor, Secretary Sudders, Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel and other state leaders marshal the state's resources to attack COVID-19.

I recognize that expectations of state employees have rapidly evolved. Over the course of a few days, we have transitioned over 40% of our staff to remote telework while working to ensure we maintain core services for the individuals and families we serve. And over the past 24 hours, we have had productive discussions and heard helpful feedback from our union partners, front line staff, and managers on areas where additional guidance would be helpful. As a result, please see below for some additional clarification.

And because the situation on the ground continues to evolve, I expect we will be working to continually assess the situation and make adjustments as necessary.

Thank you again for your public service. We appreciate your continued dedication to ensuring that the residents of the Commonwealth who rely on our services continue to receive them to the greatest extent possible. It's a privilege to serve alongside all of you.

Warmly,

Deputy Secretary Dan Tsai

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Update on telework and staffing for core functions as of March 19, 2020

As we navigate this unprecedented time, we have had to evaluate our services and determine where we can be flexible. Some services will continue to operate as usual, while others will operate differently. This may mean reducing or altering the way we provide these services. As we settle into these changes, it is important that we all better understand what has transpired over the last few days and the impact on you and the way you perform your work.

All work that state employees do is valuable and important to the agency for which they work. However during this time of emergency, certain functions are more critical to continued

operations of the agency. To protect the health and safety of our workforce, leadership and managers reviewed operations to identify all employees, which employees perform **critical, core functions**, and which employees performed **non-core functions**. Supervisors have been in contact with their teams to notify what is expected during this time.

If your manager has asked you to come in, then your work is a critical, core function.

You are expected to report to your workplace so that these essential services can be maintained. Your manager will also discuss scheduling expectations with you at that time. Appropriate social distancing practices will be observed in both internal and public-facing offices and workspace cleaning will follow CDC guidelines. If you are an employee performing critical-core functions that must be done at your workplace but have not yet been reached, you will be contacted by your manager.

If your manager has not asked you to come in, then your work is not a critical, core function.

If you have the capability to telework

If your work is not a critical, core function and you have the capability to telework, then you will be teleworking. Together, you and your manager will identify the work you are expected to perform and the best way to do it during this period. If you need to collect work-related items, you should contact your manager to schedule a pick-up time for you to come to the office in order to maintain the desired social distancing.

If you do not have capability to telework

If you are an employee who is not performing critical, core functions and you do not have the capability to telework, you will receive an alternative work assignment from your manager. As we work together with other agencies, it is possible that you will be asked to work remotely to support services for a different agency.

If you are able, please monitor your email from home and use available resources to perform your job duties. If you are unable to check your email, please stay in touch with your manager for expectations and regular updates.

Some agencies have unique needs, and those have been individually addressed. If you have questions about any of this, you should talk to your manager.

It is critical that you report your time, and that managers approve time

Self Service Time and Attendance – SSTA -- deadlines listed below **must be followed**. It is highly unlikely that there will be emergency checks issued during the immediate future. Time reporting and approvals must meet the deadlines or you run the risk of not being paid.

- The weekly time reporting deadline is Thursday, by 5:00 PM.
- SSTA is available 24/7 and can be accessed from any smart device (such as smart phones and tablets), home computer or laptop by going to www.mass.gov/massshr.
- Non-TCD users can enter time up to six (6) weeks in advance.
- If you change your time after it has been approved, you must notify your approver so that the time can be reapproved. Your approver does not receive a notification when you change your time after it has been approved.

Take care of yourself

Finally, we all recognize the stress you may be experiencing. We want to remind you of the Commonwealth's Employment Assistance Program (EAP) and its contact information at <https://www.liveandworkwell.com/content/en/public> that you and your family can use for free resources.

Please remember that the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, and resources to keep you and your family safe, can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/covid19>.