

April 23, 2020

MEMBER NEWS

COVID-19 Crisis/Recovery Edition 28

National Small Business Town Hall

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce will host National Small Business Town Hall on Friday, April 24 at noon. This week, they will continue the discussion to help business owners navigate aid to them. Panelist will break down the latest action from Washington, lay out the processes you should follow to make the most of the resources at hand and give insight on how to plan your next move. You can register for the Town Hall [HERE](#).

Member updates & resources

From Reid Health: Determining when employees can return to work — Reid Health is alerting employers about information and challenges with how to determine when an employee who contracted or was exposed to COVID-19 can be released to return to work.

Randi Whitesel, Director of Telehealth and Occupational Medicine, said the health system follows Centers for Disease Control guidelines for “return-to-work.” Because the guidelines include specific steps involving cessation of symptoms, the return-to-work information does not include a “return to work by” date. Employees are encouraged to work with their employers’ occupational health team for a return-to-work date. The guidelines assist in determining when it is appropriate to lift the self-isolation restrictions.

Annuradha Bhandari, M.D., said the process is complicated by continued limited availability of tests. “Post-infection testing is currently not available due to the inaccuracy to determine a true negative, offering a false sense of security -- and access to testing remains limited.” She said CDC guidance allows for these steps to follow:

1. Fever free for 72 hours without using fever reducing medications and,
2. 7 to 14 days of isolation for non-healthcare workers; 7 days for healthcare workers and,
3. Improvement or resolution of respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath).

All three of these parameters have to be met for the patient to be removed from isolation and there are no further recommendations to be considered fit for work. The difference in the timeframe for healthcare workers is largely due to the fact that the majority of healthcare facilities are requiring all individuals within their buildings to be masked at all times, minimizing the potential for exposure.

If the employer has questions, they can find information on the web [HERE](#). Due to HIPPA guidelines, Reid Health is not permitted to give employers any protected health information on an employee that may have been seen in its facilities.

From FASTLANE: Fisher Phillips has updated its "[Back-To-Business FAQs For Employers](#)." The firm has also updated its "[State-by-State COVID-19 Issues to Consider for the Private Sector](#)" chart.

From Ohio Farm Bureau: As the COVID-19 pandemic began to unfold and Gov. Mike DeWine issued stay-at-home orders, many essential items typically easy to find at the grocery store were quickly in limited supply. It didn't take long for retailers to place limits on many items, including milk.

Some limits on milk are still being implemented across Ohio, when in fact there is a surplus of milk being produced daily on farms. This unfortunate combination has many farms across the Midwest being forced to dump milk because processing plants have no more storage room.

“Dairy farmers and their employees wake up every single day to take care of the cows, make sure they're fed and fill up that milk tank on the farm,” said Scott Higgins, CEO of the American Dairy Association Mideast. “The challenge we are dealing with is that the milk that was used to produce cheese, butter and other staples of the restaurant industry now needs to be delivered to consumers through the grocery stores and now those stores have to be able to rise to that occasion.”

Ohio Farm Bureau has partnered with the American Dairy Association Mideast, along with regional dairy cooperatives as they communicate directly with retailers, expressing farmers' serious concerns about unnecessary limitations at the milk case.

“Outreach efforts with grocers and other retail outlets have been very productive,” said Adam Sharp, executive vice president of Ohio Farm Bureau. “We appreciate working with these groups to secure the removal of milk limits across the state.” If you see an Ohio store that is limiting milk purchases, take a picture, note the location, date and time, and send it to Erin.Brown@Drink-Milk.com so that specific store can be contacted directly.

From Job & Family Services: For the week ending April 18, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported 109,369 initial jobless claims to the U.S. Dept. of Labor. The number of initial jobless claims filed in Ohio over the last five weeks stands at nearly 1 million (964,566).

To put that in perspective, the total for the last five weeks of claims is 249,054 more than the combined total of 715,512 for the last two years. Over these last five weeks, ODJFS has distributed more than \$926 million in unemployment compensation payments to more than 376,000 claimants.

ODJFS urges individuals to file their claims online, if possible, [HERE](#). Officials said in a statement: “Each claim is important to us, and we recognize the hardship that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on many Ohio families. We are expanding staff support, working longer hours, and adding more technological capacity so that we can serve Ohioans as quickly as possible. We have extended our call center to a seven-day-a-week operation and have more than 1,600 staff taking calls, with plans to launch a virtual call center by the end of this week. All eligible Ohioans will receive their unemployment benefits – and any delays in processing their claims will not reduce the amount received. ODJFS will not rest until all eligible Ohioans are served.”

Helpful FAQ sheets & Coronavirus-specific unemployment information can be found [HERE](#).

From the Statehouse

Elective surgery order: Dr. Acton on Wednesday announced an order that directs healthcare providers in hospitals and outpatient surgery centers to reassess procedures and surgeries that were postponed.

On March 17, Dr. Acton issued an order postponing elective surgeries to conserve critical personal protective equipment (PPE) and to open bed space needed to care for COVID-19 patients.

“Because of Ohio’s hard work to flatten the curve and because of our health care system’s efforts to come together to meet community needs as a team, we have prevented the massive spike of cases that we feared,” said Governor DeWine. “We must now begin the gradual, multi-phased process of reopening, and my first concern is the patients who have had procedures and surgeries delayed.”

The new order directs healthcare professionals to review any postponed procedures or surgeries with their patients. Doctors and patients should consider the current health situations and make a joint decision about whether or not to proceed. New or other chronic conditions that may have a significant impact on a patient’s quality of life should also be evaluated.

The order also requires that patients be informed of the risk of contracting COVID-19 and the impact during the post-operative recovery process.

“Resuming elective surgeries and procedures will take clinical judgment, and we will rely on our healthcare providers to make responsible decisions as we move forward,” said Governor DeWine. “Patients must have the information necessary to make informed decisions and must pay greater attention to the effectiveness of non-surgical options.”

Mental health careline: The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS) announced the launch of a new mental health COVID CareLine for Ohioans.

Trained staff will be available to provide emotional assistance to anyone struggling with mental health concerns due to the ongoing stress of the pandemic.

The number to call is 1-800-720-9616. All calls will be confidential.



Your mental health is just as important as your physical health.
COVID CareLine: 1-800-720-9616
Help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
#IN THIS TOGETHER
Ohio

CURRENT OHIO DATA:

As of Wednesday, April 22, There are 14,177 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 584 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 2,882 people have been hospitalized, including 880 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting coronavirus.ohio.gov.

PREBLE COUNTY UPDATE: As of Wednesday, April 22, PCPH reported a total of 26 cases — 13 confirmed and 13 probable — and 24 recovered cases. Preble County has one confirmed death. New updates are released Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

Find additional information and resources at

WWW.PREBLECOUNTYOHIO.COM



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