



November 2, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

This letter is intended to aid in the provision of appropriate health care for your employees in light of our current community influenza situation. We wish to help you to assist ill employees in making good decisions regarding the need to isolate themselves or their family members should they have symptoms of viral infections.

Children and young, healthy people with fever, muscle aches, fatigue, congestion, sore throat, and possibly vomiting or diarrhea likely have a viral illness that may or may not be H1N1 influenza. The good news is that the great majority of these people will recover without complications after several days without any specific medical treatment. Over-the counter fever reducers such as Acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (i.e. Motrin) and cough/congestion medications are all that is needed in addition to drinking plenty of fluids and getting lots of rest.

Anyone ill with these symptoms should stay home and away from other people to prevent further spread of illness. If an ill employee has chronic medical problems such as asthma or an immune system disease, he or she may require closer monitoring by a physician. Also, if a person is having shortness of breath or is vomiting with inability to keep any fluids down, he or she may also require a medical evaluation.

Most otherwise healthy people with viral infections typically do not require a physician's care and certainly do not require a visit to the Emergency Department.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that people with influenza-like symptoms avoid contact with others until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. This may require that employees appropriately miss work for about one week.

We realize that many employer policies require a physician statement prior to return to work for and employee who misses three or more days. These policies promote poor use of health care resources at this time. We request that these policies be suspended for the current situation to prevent inappropriate healthcare visits and especially, inappropriate Emergency Department visits by those who are now improving and wishing to return to work. This will lessen the burden on the local health care system and allow people to follow the recommendations of the CDC.

We hope that these guidelines will aid your business during this season of viral infections. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the Fort Memorial Hospital Emergency Department at (920) 568-5330 or at Fort HealthCare Business Health at (920) 568-5018. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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