

COVID-19 Teammate FAQs

NOTE: These FAQs will be updated as we learn more and acquire new information. While this document provides general information and guidance, please contact your supervisor and/or agency human resources staff for more information.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What if I get sick?**

Stay home and get better! Follow the direction of health care professionals. As the result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) you may be eligible to use up to 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. NOTE: The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. For additional information on this options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. You can also use sick leave. If your sick leave is exhausted, you may use other leave options including vacation and/or compensatory time. If those leave options are exhausted, other paid leave benefits, such as advance sick and vacation leave and/or catastrophic leave donation, may be available with the support of your agency leadership. Unpaid leave options include Family Medical Leave (FMLA) and leave without pay. Requests for FMLA will be handled by your agency human resources and eligibility determinations made on a case-by-case basis.

UPDATED 4.17.2020 **What if I need to care for an immediate family member who is ill and/or quarantined with COVID-19?**

Stay home and help them get better. Follow the direction of health care professionals. As the result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) you may be eligible to use up to 80 hour of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. NOTE: The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. For additional information, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. You may also use sick leave, vacation leave and/or compensatory time. If those leave options are exhausted, other paid leave benefits, such as advance sick and vacation leave and/or catastrophic leave donation, may be available with the support of your agency leadership. If available, you may request remote work and telework for time not devoted to caregiving. Requests for FMLA will be handled by your agency human resources. At the agency head's discretion, the definition of "immediate family" may be broadened.

UPDATED 4.17.2020 **What if I'm not sick but directed to self-quarantine?**

If you believe you have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, please follow the direction of your health care professional. If advised to self-quarantine, as the result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) you may be eligible to use up to 80 hour of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. For additional information on this options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. Teammates may use any combination of sick leave, vacation leave, compensatory time, remote work, and telework options available to them.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What if I'm caring for a child who is not sick but at home due to a COVID-19 related closure?**

As the result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) you may be eligible to use up to 80 hour of Emergency Paid Sick Leave or may qualify to use Emergency Family and Medical Leave. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders. For additional information on these two options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. You may also use vacation and/or compensatory time for time devoted to caregiving. If those leave options are exhausted, advance vacation leave may be available with the support of your agency leadership. If available, you may request remote work and telework for time not devoted to caregiving as well as a flexible work schedule. At the agency head's discretion, the definition of "immediate family" may be broadened.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What if I'm a person who is not sick but at risk for serious illness from COVID19?**

You should seek and follow the direction of health care professionals. Then as appropriate, you should contact your supervisor to discuss remote work and telework options. If you are unable to work or telework, you may be eligible for up to 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. For additional information on these two options, please visit the Department of Labor's [FFCRA reference guide](#) or talk with your human resources business partner. The CDC is a resource for [People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19](#).

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What is a public health emergency?**

In our current situation, an emergency with respect to COVID-19 declared by a Federal, State, or local authority.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What is the Families First Coronavirus Response Act? Does it apply to the State of Nebraska?**

[The Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) provides two additional leave provisions for teammates impacted by COVID-19:

- Paid Sick Leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act
- Expanded Family and Medical Leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act.

Yes, with some exceptions, all State Teammates, full time, part time, and temporary are eligible for Paid Sick Leave and all State Teammates employed for at least 30 days are eligible for Paid Expanded Family and Medical Leave. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What is covered by the Paid Sick Leave Provision?**

The [Paid Sick Leave provisions](#) allow up to 80 hours of sick leave to teammates subject to the guidance and calculations contained in the act. The act allows certain critical positions to be excluded such as health care workers and emergency responders.

Teammates who are unable to work or telework qualify for paid sick leave due to any of the following reasons:

1. Teammate is subject to federal/state/local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. Teammate is advised by health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19;
3. Teammate is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. Teammate is caring for an individual subject to (1) or (2)
5. Teammate is caring for son/daughter if the school or place of care of the son/daughter has been closed or childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions; or
6. Teammate is experiencing “any other substantially similar condition” specified by the Department of Health and Human Services.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **Do I need to use my sick or other leave time first?**

No, the 80 hours of Paid Sick Leave are in addition to your existing accrued sick and other leaves. However, it can only be used for the qualifying reasons outlined in the provision, is not added to your existing sick leave balance, and will not carry over into the next year or beyond December 31, 2020.

NEW 3.31.2020 **How many hours of Paid Sick Leave do I qualify for?**

- Full time teammates = 80 hours
- Part-time teammates = equal to the number of hours that the teammate works, on average, over a 2-week period

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What is the pay rate for my Paid Sick Leave?**

- The greater of:
 - The teammate’s regular rate of pay;
 - The minimum wage under FLSA; or
 - The minimum wage in the State or locality, whichever is greater.
- Maximums
 - If being used for (1), (2), or (3)
 - \$511 per day
 - \$5,110 aggregate
 - If being used for (4), (5), or (6)
 - 2/3 of normal amount
 - \$200 per day
 - \$2,000 aggregate

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What is covered by the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act?**

The [Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act](#) amends the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to address COVID-19 situations. Expanded family and medical leave applies to teammates who are unable to work or telework because they are caring for a child under 18 years of age whose school or place of care has been closed, or whose child care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19. Teammates employed at the State of Nebraska for at least 30 days are eligible for up to 12 weeks of expanded family and medical leave. The first 10 days may be unpaid. Teammates are not required to, but may choose to use other paid leave options during this time. After the first 10 days, teammates are eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave subject to the guidance and calculations contained in the act.

NEW 3.31.2020 **What do I qualify for under the expanded family and medical leave?**

- 12 weeks of leave (this is not in addition to FMLA – you are only eligible to 12 weeks of eligible of FMLA total per leave).
 - The first 10 days may be unpaid leave
 - Leave after 10 days will be paid at least 2/3 of their regular rate of pay calculated by the number of hours they would have worked.
 - Maximum of \$200/day and \$10,000 aggregate

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **Can I substitute paid leave?**

- You can substitute accrued vacation leave, compensatory time, or sick leave as appropriate for unpaid leave during the first 10 days of EFMLA for this event in accordance with State policies. You may also use vacation leave or compensatory time as appropriate in conjunction with paid Expanded Family and Medical Leave during the up to 10 weeks of EFMLA.

UPDATED 3.31.2020 **Will I accrue vacation and sick leave while using this type of FMLA leave?**

- You will accrue vacation and sick leave in the same manner you would if you took FMLA leave for another qualifying reason.
- Examples
 - If the teammate did not take any type of leave for the first ten days of FMLA leave for this qualifying reason, the teammate would not accrue any paid leave during those 10 days.
 - If the teammate took vacation leave for those first ten days, the teammate would accrue paid leave.
 - If the teammate is being paid 2/3 per day pursuant to the EFMLA, the teammate would accrue paid leave as normal.

UPDATED 4.17.2020 **If I am home with my child because his or her school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, do I get Paid Sick Leave, Expanded Family and Medical Leave, or both—how do they interact?**

You may be eligible for a variety of leave options depending on your circumstances, but only for a total of twelve weeks of paid leave. You may be eligible to take both FFCRA Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Family and Medical Leave to care for your child whose school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons. The Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act provides for an initial two weeks of paid leave. This period thus covers the first ten workdays of expanded family and medical leave, which are otherwise unpaid under the Emergency and Family Medical Leave Expansion Act unless the you elect to use emergency paid sick leave, accrued vacation or sick leave, and/or compensatory time. After the first ten workdays have elapsed, you may choose any individual option or combination of options of paid Expanded Family and Medical Leave (2/3 of regular rate of pay), vacation leave (full rate of pay) and or compensatory time (full rate of pay) for the hours you used caring for your child in the up to ten subsequent weeks under the Emergency and Family Medical Leave Expansion Act.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **May I take my paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave intermittently while teleworking?**

Yes, you may use your these FFCRA paid leave options intermittently while teleworking. Please work with your Supervisor and HR leader to establish appropriate arrangements.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **What documents do I need to give my employer to get paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?**

You qualify for paid sick leave if you are unable to work or telework due to a qualifying reason related to COVID-19. You must provide to your employer documentation in support of the reasons for your paid sick leave. These documents may include a copy of the Federal, State or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or written documentation by a health care provider advising you to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.

You must provide to your employer documentation in support of your expanded family and medical leave taken to care for your child whose school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19-related reasons. For example, this requirement may be satisfied with a notice of closure or unavailability from your child's school, place of care, or child care provider, including a notice that may have been posted on a government, school, or day care website, published in a newspaper, or emailed to you from an employee or official of the school, place of care, or child care provider. Your employer must retain this notice or documentation in support of expanded family and medical leave, including while you may be taking unpaid leave that runs concurrently with paid sick leave if taken for the same reason.

Please also note that all existing certification requirements under the FMLA remain in effect if you are taking leave for one of the existing qualifying reasons under the FMLA. For example, if you are taking leave beyond the two weeks of emergency paid sick leave because your medical condition for COVID-19-related reasons rises to the level of a serious health condition, you must continue to [provide medical certifications](#) under the FMLA if required by your employer.

NEW 3.31.2020 **What timeframe does the Families First Coronavirus Response Act cover?**

The leave provisions are in effective starting April 1, 2020 and will apply to leave taken between April 1 through December 31, 2020.

UPDATED 4.15.2020 **Does this cover per diem, part-time teammates or temporary teammates?**

Yes. Full, per diem, part-time, and temporary teammates are covered by the act if they have been employed at the State of Nebraska for at least 30 days.

NEW 3.31.2020 **How do I request Paid Sick Leave and/or Families First Coronavirus Response Act?**

Please contact your Human Resource partner for more information.

NEW 3.31.2020 **For additional FAQ's questions concerning the Families First Coronavirus Response Act please visit the following resources available at the Department of Labor's website:**

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights](#)

What if I have traveled or live with someone who has traveled?

You should review the CDC's guidance on travel:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/travelers/index.html> and consult health care professionals to receive direction prior to returning to work. Follow the direction of health care professionals. Then apply the guidelines outlined above that fit your situation.

NEW 3.20.2020 Does my state insurance offer virtual visits?

Yes! Teledoc/Telehealth visits are part of the state's insurance plan. Visits are free for teammates on the Wellness and Regular health plans and are 20% after the deductible has been met for Consumer Focused Health Plan. For issues specifically related to the COVID-19 virus, the Consumer Focused High Deductible plan and the HD plans with the Direct Primary Care plans will have virtual visits available to our teammates for free as well.

NEW 4.14.2020 Can I change my dependent flexible spending account or use that money for other purposes other than child care?

At Open Enrollment each year, we enable our teammates to make choices for their deductions that will cover the year for daycare flex. COVID-19 closures of daycares, preschools, and schools are considered a qualifying events for Dependent Care FSA. As a result, you will be allowed to increase, decrease, or stop current deductions. If you would like to make changes to your current deduction, please contact the Wellness and Benefits team (as.employeebenefits@nebraska.gov). (Please note: the date used on the form should be on or after the date on which they submit the change).

In May during Open Enrollment, you will again have the opportunity to make elections for the next plan year. At that time, you may also adjust their deductions for 2020-2021 as appropriate to their situation.

NEW 4.14.2020 Can teammates change their Medical flexible spending account or use that money for other purposes other than child care?

Due to the IRS regulations, while we understand that many elective medical, dental, and vision procedures are being disrupted, the inability to obtain services is not a qualifying event to change teammate elections. The Wellness and Benefit team is monitoring this situation, but there is no indication of an IRS change at this time.

Teammates may wish to consider alternatives for reimbursable expenses. The CARES Act, enacted last week, removed the prescription requirement for medical FSA purchases and is now allowing the purchase of over-the-counter drugs and medicines using teammates' FSA. This means things such as aspirin, allergy medications, pain relievers, menstrual care products, etc. are eligible to be purchased using your FSA.

To assist teammates with the changes, there is a list of covered items on [ASI's website](#) that we encourage teammates to utilize with their FSA money.

NEW 3.20.2020 **How do I access a virtual visit?**

To access a virtual visit please follow the instructions listed below:

- Log in to www.myuhc.com or the UHC App and click on Virtual Visits.
- Choose a provider group and click through to their website. Once you make that choice, you leave www.myuhc.com and go directly to their selected provider group's page. (Please note: Teledoc is accessible directly from myuhc.com landing page. AmWell and Doctors on Demand (DOD) are accessible via each respective app or website.)
- Register - Each virtual visit provider group will require you to register – similar to “in-person” visits to a brick-and mortar clinic. Registration typically includes providing the name of the patient, health insurance, pharmacy, and other general health information. There is no charge for COVID-19 specific virtual visits. Otherwise, you are required to pay at time of service. (WellNebraska and Regular Plan cover virtual visits at 100%)
- Request a Visit - Once registered, you will request a visit and move into a virtual waiting room.
- Connect to Physician - During your visit, you will be asked to describe your symptoms and health concerns.
- Diagnosis and Prescription - The treating physician will provide a diagnoses and likely ask about your primary care physician so any notes can be shared. The virtual visit physician will then create an integrated medical record with full documentation. You can access this record once the visit is complete so you can email it or print and bring it to your primary care physician. If required, the virtual visit doctor can write a prescription that is sent electronically to your chosen pharmacy, where you can pick it up.

NEW 3.20.2020 **Does my short term disability insurance cover COVID-19?**

Your short-term disability insurance may cover COVID-19 if:

- You are placed in a medically recommended quarantine or isolation without the ability to work. (You would need to file all appropriate claims and materials to apply.)

Or if:

- You are diagnosed with COVID-19 and are too ill to work. (You would need to file all appropriate claims and materials to apply.)

Your short-term disability insurance may **NOT** cover COVID-19 if:

- You are placed in a medically recommended quarantine or isolation but you are able (not ill) to work remotely.

The State of Nebraska has no authority on approving or denying any STD claim. That decision rests solely with UHC and the determination is made from the information that is received from the teammate, their HR partner (Employer) and the physician.

Additional Information:

- **NOTE:** Since the CDC has encouraged individuals to contact health care professionals remotely rather than physically going to a medical facility, requirements for a medical certificate documenting the illness may be waived. Beginning 03/01/2020, COVID-19 related [Virtual Visits](#) are available at no charge if you participate in a state medical plan.
- **My Health:** You can help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 using social distancing and good hygiene. Teammates who are ill should stay home. Teammates who come to work showing symptoms of being ill will be sent home. Helpful resources are provided at the [DHHS COVID-19 site](#).
- **UPDATED 3.25.2020 My Self Care:** Helpful resources to help manage anxiety and stress are available on the [CDC website](#) or through the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP)
- **My Workplace:** For COVID-19 workplace issues, critical communication and guidance will be coordinated through the Public Health Office appropriately with agency leadership and those who are affected.
- **My Medical Insurance:** Normally if you are in an unpaid status for 14 consecutive days your health insurance would cease at the end of that month. There are special COVID-19 provisions now in place so that if your circumstances would result in an unpaid status for 14 consecutive days directly due to COVID19, your health insurance would continue uninterrupted as long as you continue to pay your premiums.
- **UPDATED 3.18.2020 My Coverage for COVID-19 Tests/Medical Visits:** As of 3/1/2020 COVID-19 diagnostic testing and the testing kits are covered at 100% (no members cost share) and this applies to all plans. Office visits and/or hospitalization will be covered by your state insurance with the appropriate co-pays and deductibles as it relates to the plan the you are currently on.
- **UPDATED 3.18.2020 My Prescriptions:** Optum Rx through United HealthCare, our pharmacy vendor will be allowing you to refill your prescription early. You contact your Pharmacy or call the phone number listed on the back of your UHC card for assistance.

NOTE: For Benefits-related questions, contact your agency human resources staff or State Personnel Benefits at 402-471-4443 or Toll-Free at 877-721-2228. Email: as.employeebenefits@nebraska.gov.