

To: All CUIMC Staff

Subject: Covid-19 Related Leave Time

From: Bill Innes

Date: March 25, 2020

Columbia University Irving Medical Center is at the forefront of the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. **We rely on all of the faculty and staff to come to work to deliver essential health care and support services.** We are working with our partner, New York Presbyterian, to provide additional staff to help them in their efforts to cope with the overwhelming needs of our community. This means that some of our faculty and staff could be called upon to perform duties outside of their current department. In all cases, any reassignment will be done in consultation with your supervisor and will be consistent with your training and skills, as well as safety policies.

While we are dealing with the ever-changing landscape caused by COVID-19, we have had numerous questions from our employees. This email outlines two new temporary policies related to pay continuity and paid emergency absences.

- **Telecommuting:** managers have been asked to permit all non-patient facing employees to telecommute, to the extent possible. Employees with approved telecommuting arrangements will continue to be paid as usual
- **Pay Continuity:** Columbia understands that some employees cannot perform their job functions remotely. Employees may be given new assignments outside of their regular duties or recalled to perform duties that are necessary to ensure the operations of the University. For employees who are available to work but do not have assigned tasks or alternative assignments, the University is currently providing paid excused absences. As circumstances unfold, we will review this among other temporary policies, and communicate changes with you and your managers and supervisors.
- **Paid Emergency Absence:** Columbia recognizes that some employees who have assigned tasks or alternative assignments may, from time to time, find themselves unable to perform this work because of school closures, lack of available child care, or similar external challenges related to COVID-19. We urge you to seek alternative child care arrangements and have identified resources noted below. In case these do not work, we are offering our full-time and regular part-time employees up to 10 paid work days of emergency absence time in these situations, in addition to any other available leave benefits under our existing University policies (including up to 40 hours under the New York City Earned Safe and Sick Time Act). Employees should submit requests for an emergency absence to their managers. We will consider requests for an emergency absence in half-day or full-day increments. Approved emergency absences will be paid based on the employee's regular scheduled hours and regular rate of pay. This emergency absence time is separate from the paid excused absences available when employees do not have assigned work described in the preceding paragraph.

These leave policies are temporary and will be reviewed periodically. As circumstances unfold, we will review these temporary policies as well as other University policies relating to leave time and communicate changes with you.

In order to help employees to deal with the issues related to child care, the University provides support through Bright Horizons which can assist with backup care.

Here are instructions for reserving care:

- With this program, eligible employees can book in-home child or adult care through the Bright Horizons network. To access this service, visit <https://worklife.columbia.edu/backupcare>.
- For first time registration, use employer username: columbia | password: Benefits4You or call 877-BH-CARES (242-2737).
- For guidelines on back-up care related to COVID-19, visit <https://worklife.columbia.edu/news/bright-horizons-back-care-policy-covid-19-exposure>
- If Bright Horizons is unable to secure care through their network, you may be given the option to use child care from within your personal network (a neighbor, friend, or babysitter) and receive a reimbursement of \$100 per day but you must go through the regular Bright Horizons process. More information is available on this flyer: https://worklife.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Crisis%20Care%20COVID-19%20Flyer%20March-April%202020_Columbia%20University_NTX5001%203.23.20.pdf

Please note that on March 18, President Trump signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which creates the Family Medical Leave Expansion Act and Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act in order to provide protections for employees who need to take leave during the COVID-19 health crisis. Although this law does not apply to large employers such as Columbia University, the provisions of the above Paid Emergency Absence exceed those of the FFCRA.

Over the coming weeks, the situation surrounding COVID-19 across the globe will continue to evolve. Our responsibility in these times is to do our best, work together, and remain united in our dedication to our mission and our community. The entire leadership is profoundly grateful for each and every person's dedication and commitment in these trying times.

Please contact your school/department HR team or your Senior HR Business Partner if you have questions.