



Bermuda Hospitals Board

COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES **AT HIGHER RISK FROM INFECTION**

29 April 2020

Some employees may be at higher risk for serious illness following infection with COVID-19. We are actively considering how we can help reduce face-to-face contact between these employees, assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, or to work remotely if possible.

The following table outlines employment accommodations which BHB is presently in a position to offer in respect of the different risk factors listed. We have taken guidance from our overseas partners at Johns Hopkins, Brigham and Women and the NHS, and also considered the relatively high number of BHB Employees with chronic illness versus the need to maintain an essential service in these unprecedented times.

Employment Accommodation	Risk Factor
Job duties as usual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age over 65 years old • Body mass index (BMI) over 40 • Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes with HgBA1C less than 12 in last 3 months (see note 2 below). • Treatment with DMARDS eg methotrexate, azathioprine. • Dialysis • Mild- moderate asthma or COPD (see note 3 below) • Mental Illness
Avoid aerosolised procedure room AND avoid rooms with patients under investigation for COVID-19, AND maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other workers, or if this is not possible, work remotely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active chemotherapy • Acquired immune deficiency with CD4 less than 200 • High dose or prolonged steroids greater than 40 mg prednisone daily for more than 2 weeks. • Transplant Recipients. • Biological immune-suppression eg remicade, rituxan. Severe heart disease, e.g.severe coronary artery disease, EF less than 25%, New York Heart Association class 3 or 4. • Diagnosed severe asthma or COPD or other severe lung condition. I.e .oxygen dependent ,or more than 1 ICU admission, or 3 or more admissions for respiratory illness in last 12 months (see note 3 below). • Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes with HgbA1C greater than 12 in last 3 months (see note 2 below). • Pregnancy (see note 1 below)
	Other illnesses or combinations of illnesses for special consideration will be assessed by EHS on a case by case basis.



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Notes

1. We do not know at this time what, if any, risk is posed to infants of a pregnant woman who has COVID-19. Current data on COVID-19 and pregnancy does not show increased risk, but we are taking precautions until evidence is clear.
2. All Employees with diabetes are advised to contact their managing physician or nurse for guidance on optimisation of blood glucose control and management of diabetes.
3. All Employees with asthma or COPD are advised to contact their managing physician or nurse for optimisation of their medications and action plan.

HIGH-RISK EMPLOYEE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

If an employee is concerned that he/she might be at high risk due to an underlying condition and would like to make a request for employment accommodation, the employee should take the following steps:

- 1) Notify Employee Health Services (EHS), preferably by email (ehs@bhb.bm) or call EHS at 293-1529, stating that the employee is submitting a request for employment accommodation. The employee must also provide his/her telephone number, email address, department and manager's name.
- 2) Ask the employee's managing physician to submit an electronic letter outlining the employee's medical concerns so that a working diagnosis is provided to EHS (ehs@bhb.bm).
- 3) Inform the employee's manager that he/she is seeking employment accommodation and that his/her managing physician is contacting EHS with the required documentation. The employee is under no obligation to disclose his/her personal health details to their manager. The manager must respect the employee's privacy in this regard.

Requests for employment accommodation will be considered by the EHS physician as quickly as possible, in conjunction with appropriate Human Resources policies. The employee will be notified of EHS's decision electronically by email or, where no email address is provided, by telephone, regarding any employment accommodation. The employee's manager will also be notified of any employment accommodation arrangements. The manager will not be informed of the employee's personal health details. As always, EHS will treat your medical information confidentially.

EHS is the ultimate medical decision maker regarding issues of employment accommodation. BHB supports the decision of EHS, even if such a decision is at variance with the managing physician.

Any approval for employment accommodation is contingent upon meeting the operational needs of the employee's department together with the Human Resources & Organisational Development department



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Please Note: this Guidance is issued in conjunction with our existing policies of Reasonable Accommodation for Disabilities Policy, 2017; Sick Policy 2019 and Attendance Management Policy, 2017. For the avoidance of doubt, these policies remain in full force and effect and should continue to be complied with.

While BHB is very sympathetic and will be as supportive as possible of employees who have underlying health concerns, BHB also plays a crucial as an essential service provider to the general population, including its employees, in this time of national crisis.

We must ensure that there are as many employees as possible are available to service our health care system as we rise to face this challenge, all of us together.



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BHB ACCEPTABLE MEDICAL DOCTOR'S CERTIFICATE TEMPLATE

Purpose: Bermuda Hospitals Board has a sick leave benefit for all employees that significantly exceeds the legislated two-week minimum. As prescribed in the Collective Bargaining Agreements, utilisation of the sick leave benefit is to be protected at all costs for employees when they are genuinely sick and incapable of attending work due to ill health. It is not a discretionary benefit that is approved for use based simply on physician notification or desire by the employee to take leave from work.

BHB employees have a comparatively rich vacation leave policy that ranges from 17 days to 35 days depending on their collective bargaining unit and seniority. Employees that are not genuinely sick but require time off from work may use vacation to take time away from work duties for any other reason.

To ensure accuracy and confidence in requests from physicians to provide employees with access to sick leave benefits, the physician shall provide written documentation of the information requested in the sample form to their patient and/or BHB's Employee Health Services department (when requested with the permission of their patient).

Sample

NAME OF PRACTITIONER:
OFFICE ADDRESS OF PRACTITIONER:
QUALIFICATION OF PRACTITIONER:
DATE:
PATIENT NAME:

DOCTOR'S MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

Dear Sir/Madam

I hereby certify that has/has not been examined by my office on I hereby certify that there is a working diagnosis with an associated (CPT/ICD9 code) on record with my office that justifies my recommendation.

I hereby certify that the patient is unfit for work for a period fromto based on my working diagnosis.

Signature on line above

INITIALS AND SURNAME IN BLOCK LETTERS OR OFFICE STAMP