

## ***A message from our medical director***

*June 19, 2020*

### **COVID-19 is Still a Threat**

I have a very simple message about COVID-19: We are now seeing more new cases in Central Louisiana, specifically in Rapides Parish, than at any time before or during the governor's stay-at-home orders, indicating that it is increasingly spreading in our community. Although this may not be the case in the parish or county in which you live, it is important to realize that far from being over, the pandemic still has significant potential to have major impacts on the health of our families and communities, as well as on our ability to safely operate our workplaces.

A key thing to remember is that COVID-19 can be spread while you don't have any symptoms. You can catch it from someone else who doesn't have symptoms, and you can then also spread it to someone else before you have any symptoms (or even if you are one of the about 30% who never develop any symptoms at all). And even if you aren't at risk for serious problems, your coworkers or loved ones may be, so please protect yourselves for their sakes as well as for your own.

There are a few guidelines we should all be following both at work and outside of work:

1. Anyone who is sick with even minor symptoms but especially fever (99.5 or above), cough, runny nose, sore throat, fatigue, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea should immediately isolate from others (if at work, leave work immediately) and contact Legacy or your preferred healthcare provider for direction and receive clearance before returning to work.
2. Everyone should always maintain physical distancing from people outside of your own family unit. This means a minimum of 6 feet of distance at all times.
3. When such social distancing is difficult or impossible, ESPECIALLY between people who are talking to one another, masks should be worn. Masks significantly reduce the spread of COVID-19 in these situations. Masks are available for you near the timeclock to use daily at all company locations.
4. Washing your hands often is key. Cleaning and disinfecting work stations during the day and especially between shifts continues to be very important to stop the spread of infection.
5. Other physical barriers and work practice modifications should be utilized as appropriate for the individual location's circumstances. For example, using glass or acrylic barriers for face-to-face interactions and avoiding unnecessary traffic into office spaces can be very helpful to limit exposures. Every team member is encouraged to share opportunities to further protect one another in our workplace settings.

How long can we expect the pandemic to last? No one knows for sure, except that it will almost certainly last longer than any of us want it to. Thank you for doing your part to remain patient and vigilant for the foreseeable future so that we can all protect ourselves, our families, and our coworkers, as well as our ability to maintain business operations safely.



**Dr. Brian Elkins**  
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