Health update

Issue #3
May 14, 2020

Innovation in testing and treatment for the workplace

Overview

According to the Johns Hopkins University, as of Wednesday, May 13, 2020, the Coronavirus SARS-coV-2, has infected more than 4.2 million people worldwide (1.3+ million in the United States) and killed more than 242,000 (82,000+ in the United States).

Source: https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html

Testing update

Until this week, there have been two main methods of testing. One to detect if you currently have the virus; which has been a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. It detects an active COVID-19 infection. The other type is a serological test that looks for antibodies to the virus; which can help identify individuals who have developed an adaptive immune response to the virus. Now, the "antigen test", designed for rapid virus detection, has been added to the mix.

Antigen tests will play an important function in the overall response against COVID-19 as they can generally be produced at a lower cost than PCR tests and once multiple manufacturers enter the market, can potentially scale to test millions of Americans per day due to their simpler design, helping our country better identify infection rates closer to real time. One of the main advantages of an antigen test is the speed of the test, which can provide results in minutes. However, unlike PCR tests, there is a higher chance of false negatives, so negative results do not rule out infection. In those cases, the doctor may also order a PCR test to verify the results.

Source: https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-authorizes-first-antigen-test-help-rapid-detection-virus-causes

Testing availability and access is highly localized in geographic areas in the United States. There continues to be confusion as to which test(s) require a doctor's order, the availability of tests, where the tests are administered, and how long it takes for test results to be returned. Buck is working with clients in various geographies to identify resources and solutions.

Treatment and vaccine update

Currently, there are 210 treatments in consideration and 125 vaccines in development. Some vaccines are in human trials and may be available in 12 -18 months.

Physically returning to the facility

As Americans get back to work during this unprecedented pandemic, business owners are understandably concerned about providing a healthy and safe environment for workers and customers. Guidance for return-to-work strategies are changing each day and employer policies must be individualized to meet the needs of their organization.

For most employers, protecting workers will depend on testing, screening, and emphasizing basic infection prevention measures. The Buck team is here to help create and review these policies to follow best practice guidelines, including:

- Implement procedures for testing and monitoring visitors, contractors and employees.
- Determine method for self-screening/attestation and provide guidelines, forms, and technology for screening, testing, tracking, and/or tracing.
- Promote personal and environmental hygiene.
- Develop policies and procedures for PPE application to include training individuals on the proper use, care, destruction and replacement of equipment.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices to include routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment.

Learn more

This health brief on the clinical topics and innovations surrounding the SARS-coV-2 virus and COVID-19 disease was prepared by Buck's Health Intelligence practice.

For more information, contact us at **866-355-6647** or talktous@buck.com.

BUCK