

# Health update

Issue #2

May 7, 2020

## Innovation in testing and treatment for the workplace

### Overview

According to the World Health Organization, as of Tuesday, May 5, 2020, the Coronavirus SARS-coV-2, has infected more than 3.5 million people worldwide (1.2+ million in the United States) and killed more than 252,000 (69,000+ in the United States).

### Testing

There has been a flurry of activity this week around testing availability and access, which is highly localized in geographic areas in the United States. There is some confusion as to which test(s) to use, the availability of test kits and reagents (the chemicals used to process the 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.

When the pandemic first started, the CDC did not recommend testing for the virus unless an individual had symptoms of COVID-19. Recently, the CDC released new guidelines expanding testing criteria to people who may not have symptoms, but who work in moderate to high-risk settings. Studies have shown that 20-50% of individuals who test positive for COVID-19 have few or no symptoms. These individuals may still be capable of spreading the disease.

### Medication and Antibody Update

There are more than 199 medications and antibody solutions in the product development pipeline.

- There are no approved coronavirus treatments at this time; however, the CDC reports that progress is being made. Remdesivir, an intravenous antiviral medication, was granted emergency use authorization by the FDA to be used in critically ill patients.
- Researchers are also testing older medications (that are typically used to treat other conditions) to see if they are effective in treating COVID-19.

Source: <http://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2020/05/remdesivir-gets-emergency-approval-from-fda-for-covid-19.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>

## **Vaccine Update**

Currently, there are at least 123 global vaccine programs under way, according to the Milken Institute, which is tracking the development of treatments and vaccines for COVID-19. Several vaccines are in human trials. Optimistically, we will see comprehensive vaccine clinical trials during the first quarter of 2021.

Source: <https://milkeninstitute.org/covid-19-tracker>

## **Return to Work Policies**

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 is changing every day and employer policies must be individualized to meet the needs of their organization. The Buck team is here to help create and review these policies to conform with the best practice guidelines.

For most employers, protecting workers will depend on emphasizing basic infection prevention measures. As appropriate, all employers should implement good hygiene and infection control practices, including:

- Promote frequent and thorough hand washing, including by providing workers, customers, and worksite visitors with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Encourage workers to stay home if they are sick.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes. Provide masks to employees and visitors as needed.
- Provide customers and the public with tissues and trash receptacles.
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment.

Health briefing — Innovation in testing and treatment for the workplace

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

Health briefing — Innovation in testing and treatment for the workplace

### **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](mailto:talktous@buck.com).

The information in this article is provided for general information purposes only and is not intended to address your requirements. While we will endeavor to keep the Information accurate, we cannot and do not guarantee the accuracy of the Information, and we accept no responsibility, and shall have no liability, for any loss or damage which may arise from using or

