Transitioning Back to the Workplace Toolkit

Overview

As federal, state, and local governments implement plans to re-open the economy and restore normal business activities, workplaces face a number of considerations to safely resume operations. COVID-19 has transformed the way businesses and individuals interact. While some activities will return to normalcy quickly, other practices may be gradually phased-in or reconsidered entirely. This "Transitioning Back Toolkit" provides a framework with key considerations and mitigation efforts to assist employers' transition plans and ensure alignment with public health guidelines and best practices.

Contents

Tab		Description
Summary	→	Overview and bird's eye view of the "Transitoning Back to the Workplace Toolkit"
Transitioning Toolkit - Master	→	Master document with all key issues and considerations - the following tabs are broken down by section
Testing-Screening of Staff	→	Testing and Screening considerations for staff
Employee Work Rules	→	Rules and policies to re-enter the wokplace
Needs of Non-Vulneralbe & Vulnerable Staff	→	Key considerations for all members of staff
Review of Programs and Services	→	Strategy, policies, and protocols for programs and service delivery
Needs of Non-Vul & Vul Pop	→	Anticipated needs and issues for populations served
IT Capabilities	→	Technology and digital enablement considerations
Advocacy Efforts	→	Regulatory, policy, and advocacy priorities and strategy
Fiscal Considerations	→	Understanding and planning for cash flow changes as a result of COVID-19
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Topic	Issues / Activities	Next Steps	Responsible Departments								Phases/Time	
			Leadership	Fiscal	Legal	Human Resources	Information Technology	Program	Facilities	Others	Phase 1 - Spring (May)	Phase 2 - Summer (June August)
Testing/Screening of Staff	Define expectations for testing and screening of all staff before they return to work and ongoing testing/screening requirements. These should be consistent with federal, state, and city/local guidelines. Some considerations include: Requiring temperature screenings; Providing daily questionnaires; and Offering additional resources for testing/ screening tools.											
	Determine whether to provide testing and screening tools directly or to refer to external vendor.											
	Develop testing and screening protocols, including how to deal with positive tests and/or high-risk screening results, addressing issues such as: Infection control; Work from home option; and Additional sick days.											
	Address union considerations, if any.											
	Update employee policies and procedures / employee handbook with information on testing and screening and other related issues.											
	Develop communication strategy to staff, clients, and external stakeholders, including training for staff.											
	Understand the fiscal implications for all decisions.											
Employee Work Rules	Develop process for reviewing frequently changing federal, state, and city/local guidelines and updating workplace policies and procedures accordingly.											
	Develop work rules that promote better sanitation and infection control through various cleanliness and social distancing practices some ideas include but not limited to: Determine hand-washing expectations and/or provide hand sanitizer stations; Increasing cleaning schedules in common areas such as kitchens, conference rooms, elevators, waiting areas, staff lounges, and bathrooms; Consider employee and visitor access to buildings and hours of operation; Institute social distancing expectations and measures; and Delineate private vs open spaces.											
	Determine whether and when to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and/or face coverings to staff.											
	Identify and procure PPE and other supplies needed for safe operations.											
	Determine whether to implement a phase-in approach for having staff back at the office to limit density and promote social distancing. This could be accomplished by staggering staff schedules, allowing vulnerable staff to work from home, or other mechanisms.											
	Determine when business travel should and should not be permitted and develop rules around safe practices during business travel.											
	Ensure rules and application of rules are neutral and fair to avoid claims of discrimination.											
	Address union considerations, if any.											
	Update employee policies and procedures / employee handbook with information on new work rules.											
	Develop communication strategy to staff, including training, new signage in common areas, and more.											
	Understand the fiscal implications for all decisions.											
Needs of Non-Vulnerable and Vulnerable Staff	Anticipate the unique issues and needs of different non-vulnerable and vulnerable staff. Issues and needs may include: Having co-morbid conditions that increase risk; Schools/day care/camps remaining closed (ie. need for additional programs); Having family caregiving responsibilities; Having household members with co-morbid conditions; Transportation issues to and from work; and General, non-clinical anxiety about returning to work.											
	Determine reasonable accomodation options for staff, including but not limited to: Offering private offices, remote work spaces, or work from home options; Creating staggered work hours and/or flexible work schedules; and Assisting employee access to therapist and other emotional supports, especially for front line workers.											
	Address union considerations, if any.											
	Update employee policies and procedures / employee handbook with information on accomodations.											
	Develop communication strategy to staff, including training.											
	Understand the fiscal implications for all decisions.											
Review of Programs and Services	Incorporate COVID-related screenings/protocols for clients throughout programs.											
	Ensure clinics, residences, and other facilities are configured to limit risk for both staff and clients including, but not limited to: Spaced out waiting rooms; Restrictions to only essential family on site with patient; Requirements that family wear PPE											
	Implement policies and procedures to limit risk for both staff and clients including but not limited to: Spaced out appointments; Limited visits by family; and Virtual programming and services when appropriate.											
	Reach out to and review referral protocols with partners.											
	Review long-term regulations and requirements for providing face-to-face vs. telehealth services.											
	Administer survey to both program staff and clients to determine efficacy of and satisfaction with telehealth services compared to face-to-face services.											
	Review fiscal data on productivity and sustainability of offering telehealth and face-to-face services.											
	Determine strategy and plan of offering a mix of face-to-face and telehealth services going forward with respect to safety, efficacy, satisfaction, staff capacity, and fiscal viability. This plan can be phased in depending on staff capacity, IT resources, and other considerations.											
	Review current productivity standards and compare to pre-COVID, during COVID response, and expectations after.											
	Ensure telehealth platform meets HIPAA and other regulatory requirements and is integrated with EHR platform to address billing, audit, and other requirements.											
Needs of Non-Vulnerable and Vulnerable Populations	Anticipate the unique issues and needs of different non-vulnerable and vulnerable populations. Issues and needs may include: Having co-morbid conditions that increase risk; Schools/day care/camps remaining closed (ie. need for additional programs); Having household members with co-morbid conditions; and Needs of foster parents.											
	Determine appropriate service options for clients and their families, including telehealth options, after-hours and weekend appointments.											
	Understand the fiscal implications for all decisions.											
Information Technology Capabilities	Review use of technology across all departments.											
	Ensure that remote staff have devices and tools in place to be effective.											
	Implement staff communication tools, such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or other programs to support collaboration.											
	Explore additional technologies and solutions that can support and enhance programs and services.											
Advocacy Efforts	Identify positive experiences during the COVID crisis that should continue.											
	Identify issues during the COVID crisis that should be addressed going forward.											
	Determine priority issues to advocate for in the near term for issues including, but not limited to: Continuation of relaxed telehealth rules; Expanded scope of practice allowances; and Waivers for new staff hires.								Government Relations		
	Develop a strategy to advocate for priority issues, including whether to push them individually and/or through a trade association and at the local, state, and/or federal level.											
Fiscal Considerations	Identify, review, and submit proposals for all eligible grants.											
	Identify and isolate all COVID-related expenses and losses that could be related to the following and more: Telehealth tools; New devices to support staff to work remotely; and PPE procurement.											
	Review revenue and expenses across programs and departments during COVID crisis and compare to before COVID crisis to plan for future.								Grants Department		
	Develop cash flow projections to manage cash in the short and medium terms.											
	Perform an inventory of assets that can be monitized to help with longer-term sustainability.											
	Review insurance policies to see if they would cover any unanticipated costs											
	Review Medicaid, Medicare, and managed care organization billing changes and ensure compliance.											
	Ensure billing staff are trained on new billing codes and modifiers and they are integrated with EHR.											
Buildings / Facilities	Review new regulations and building codes related to COVID and ensure compliance.											
	Review physical plant for potential modifications to ensure compliance with federal, state, and city/local guidelines, as well as new policies and procedures to ensure safety of staff and clients including, but not limited to: Providing hand sanitizer stations; Reconfiguring office space; and Setting reduced maximum capacity requirements to decrease density.											
	Review issues related to owning vs. leasing/renting space.											
Human Resources / Legal Risk Mitigation Strategies	Review current policies and COVID requirements and modify based on new federal, state, city/local guidelines and other measures to ensure safety and mitigate risk.											
	Review staffing across programs and develop a plan for realignment, recruiting, training, and more.											
	Institute clear policies and procedures for all individuals on the premises to limit legal liability if anyone contracts COVID-19 while on premises											

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	Additional sick days.												
	Address union considerations, if any.												
	Update employee policies and procedures / employee handbook with information on testing and screening and other related issues.												
	Develop communication strategy to staff, clients, and external stakeholders, including training for staff.												
	Understand the fiscal implications for all decisions.												

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