

**From:** [Montalbano, Ivonne](#)  
**Subject:** Managing Employees During COVID-19 Pandemic  
**Date:** Friday, April 3, 2020 4:26:35 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Good Afternoon,

At ESO, we understand the recent move to temporary online operations and the expanded employee rights that became effective April 1 may be causing some confusion and raising questions for our managers. To help address some of the uncertainties and provide important updates, we compiled the following information for your reference. If after reading this email you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to me or [our team](#).

## STUDENT WORKERS

**March 16 – April 17** (Further guidance will be provided for the period of April 18 to April 30.)

- Students under the Federal Work-Study (FWS), Texas Work-Study (TWS) and Non-College Work-Study (NCWS) programs have been approved to work remotely to the extent they are able to perform their functions remotely. Student workers whose jobs don't lend themselves to telecommute may be assigned special projects and/or professional development, through [LinkedIn Learning](#) or other venues, for the hours they were scheduled to work. (LinkedIn Learning offers over 10,000 free, on-demand courses that support the development of skills and competencies in areas such as oral and written communication, customer service, critical thinking, initiative and collaboration.)
  - This work needs to be recorded in TRAM.
  - If approved to telecommute or work remotely, make sure a [COVID-19 Telecommuting Form](#) has been completed, signed by you and forwarded to [Benefits@uhd.edu](mailto:Benefits@uhd.edu).
- Students under the Federal Work-Study (FWS) and Texas Work-Study (TWS) programs who are unable to telecommute will be paid for the hours they were scheduled to work throughout this period, as per guidance received from the Department of Education. **Supervisors of FWS and TWS student workers need to enter the hours each student was scheduled to work directly on their timesheets** following the instructions outlined in the [Adjusting Timesheets guide](#), which can be found in the [ESO COVID-19 Resources webpage](#).
  - Please note: If FWS or TWS students work remotely and the total punches for the workweek do not match the total hours they were scheduled to work, you will need to adjust the student's timesheet by supplementing the punches with additional hours worked to total the hours scheduled to work.
- Students under the Non-College Work-Study (NCWS) program who are unable to telecommute will also be paid for the hours they were scheduled to work throughout this period. President Muñoz approved Emergency Leave for NCWS student workers. **Supervisors of NCWS student workers need to enter Emergency Leave for the hours each student was scheduled to work directly on their timesheets** following the instructions outlined in the [Adjusting Timesheets guide](#), which can be found in the [ESO COVID-19 Resources webpage](#).

- Please note: If NCWS students work remotely and the total punches for the workweek do not match the total hours they were scheduled to work, you will need to adjust the student's timesheet. The timesheet must match the total hours they were scheduled to work each week. You can do this by using Emergency Leave in combination with the hours they worked.

## STAFF EMPLOYEES

- When you receive a [COVID-19 Telecommuting Form](#), please sign it as soon as possible and email it to [Benefits@uhd.edu](mailto:Benefits@uhd.edu). Staff who previously submitted the form do not need to resubmit a new form since it will remain in effect until President Muñoz discontinues COVID-19 telecommuting and remote work.
  - Please note: In the signature portion of the form, you may type in your initials or your name in the signature box to act as your signature. Once signed and dated, please save the form and email it electronically to [Benefits@uhd.edu](mailto:Benefits@uhd.edu).
- If you approved Emergency Leave for an exempt employee, the employee will need to submit an Emergency Leave request through PASS for the period of emergency leave granted. However, if the employee is quarantined for part of this period, your exempt staff must select one of the Quarantine Leaves located in the [Tracking Quarantine Leave/Quarantine Remote Work guide](#), which can be found in the [ESO COVID-19 Resources webpage](#).
  - Please note: All regular leave types, such as vacation, sick, bereavement, etc. should continue to be used as appropriate by your employees and will continue to require supervisory approval.
- If you have questions about managing your employees during the move to online operations, please check out the following important ESO resources.
  - [ESO COVID-19 Resources webpage](#)
  - [Coronavirus Guidance for Managers](#)
  - [Telecommuting Tips for Working Remotely at UHD](#)
  - [Additional Resources for Working Remotely](#)
  - [COVID-19 Telecommuting Form](#)

## MANAGING NEW LEAVES

Beginning April 1, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides eligible UHD employees emergency paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions last through December 31, 2020.

### Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) Related to COVID-19

UHD employees who are unable to work, whether in-person or telework, may request EPSL.

**EPSL applies to all full- and part-time faculty and staff, student workers and temporary employees regardless of tenure at UHD.**

Even though the FFCRA provided six qualifying reasons for this leave, all UHD employees unable to work, whether in-person or telework, would qualify for EPSL at full pay during the Harris County 'Stay at Home' order period, not to exceed 80 hours for full-time employees and pro-rated hours over a two-week period for part-time employees.

### Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) Leave

EFMLEA leave is available to UHD employees if they are unable to work, whether in-person or telework, because they need to care for their child(ren) as their school or place of care has been closed, or the regular childcare provider is unavailable due to a COVID-19 public health emergency. **EFMLEA leave applies to all full- and part-time faculty and staff, student workers and temporary employees employed at UHD for at least 30 calendar days who meet the criteria above.**

EFMLEA leave is for up to 12 weeks from April 1 to December 31, 2020. However, if an employee has used Family and Leave Act (FMLA) leave within the past 12-month period, the employee will only be eligible for the remaining number of weeks.

EFMLEA leave is unpaid for the first 10 days of leave but employees may use any accrued leave or EPSL. After the first 10 days, leave will be paid at 2/3 of the employee's regular rate of pay up to \$200 daily and supplemented with state emergency leave for the remaining 1/3. **This process will be done automatically by the payroll process. Neither the employee nor the supervisor will be required to enter emergency leave in PASS for this purpose.**

In the event both spouses are UHD employees and they want to request EFMLEA leave, they are entitled together to a total of twelve weeks of FMLA/EFMLEA leave between them during the year (rather than twelve weeks each). A jointly filed request form is required from spouses who are both requesting leave.

Intermittent EFMLEA leave is also available.

To apply for these leaves, employees must complete the [Emergency Paid Leave and Emergency FMLEA Form](#) and forward it to [Benefits@uhd.edu](mailto:Benefits@uhd.edu). ESO's Benefits Department will manage these leaves.

## **EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH**

### **UHD's Employee Assistance Program (UTEAP)**

- Please remind your employees they, along with their dependents, continue to have access to a valuable resource, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- UTEAP offers a confidential, free counseling and referral program available 24/7. Whether they are dealing with concerns about the unknowns surrounding COVID-19, want to resolve a stressful situation, find legal resources or get advice about a financial concern, UTEAP is there to help.
- If they need to speak to a counselor about their concerns, have them contact 713-500-3327 or 800-346-3549. For more information, have them visit [UHD's EAP site](#).
- In addition to their usual resources, UTEAP offers specific COVID-19 Resources. Please feel free to share these with your employees.

[Coronavirus \(COVID19\) Preparedness guide](#)

- [Coping with COVID-19 fears](#)
- [Helping children cope with COVID-19](#)
- [You can be a Health Hero! \(video for children ages 5-10\)](#)
- [Managing COVID-19 anxiety and stress webinar](#)
- [Ways to keep CALM webinar](#)
- [Ways to stay connected without leaving your home](#)
- [Feeling lonely? You're not alone](#)
- [Things to do with your kids while you're home together](#)
- [Coping with COVID-19 for medical staff](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Things to do while staying at home \(infographic\)](#)
- [Ways to stay CALM \(infographic\)](#)

### **HealthSelect Mental Health**

- Employees enrolled in HealthSelect<sup>SM</sup> of Texas, HealthSelect Out-of-State or Consumer Directed HealthSelect can see a licensed mental health professional by scheduling an in-office visit. More information can be found on [HealthSelect's Mental Health Benefits webpage](#).
- If an office visit is not convenient, employees enrolled in HealthSelect plans can meet with a provider from the comfort of their home by scheduling a mental health virtual visit. Mental health virtual visits are offered through Doctor On Demand<sup>®</sup> and MDLIVE<sup>®</sup> and are covered at the same benefit level as an in-office mental health visit. More information can be found on [HealthSelect's Virtual Visits webpage](#).

I will be meeting with department, college and division business administrators next week to discuss this information and ensure they understand these changes and related processes.

Best,

**Ivonne Montalbano, MBA, SPHR, SHRM-SCP**

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