July 9, 2020

RE: Employee Screening for COVID-19

We have received increasing reports of employers asking employees without symptoms to undergo testing for COVID-19 as a condition of employment. While not prohibited, the Oregon Health Authority does not generally recommend requiring employees without symptoms for COVID-19 to be tested. Testing of individuals with no COVID-19 like symptoms is very unlikely to detect cases of COVID-19 and does not provide any guarantee that COVID-19 will not enter the workplace.

The actions below are a better way to protect your workplace from COVID-19 infection:

- Screen employees for symptoms of COVID-19 at the beginning of each shift (e.g., asking if an employee has had cough, fever, shortness of breath, or is otherwise feeling unwell). If an employee has any COVID-19 like symptoms or does not feel well, they should be asked to go home.
- Encourage employees to stay home when ill and provide sick leave
- Require employees to wear masks, face shields or face coverings consistent with OHA guidance
- Ensure that employees maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others
- Encourage frequent handwashing
- Disinfect the workplace frequently

Requiring employees without symptoms for COVID-19 to be tested places an unnecessary burden on employees and uses valuable testing resources. If you do require testing as a condition of employment, you must pay for that expense. You should review the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s guidance.

We thank you for your collaboration. Guidance for employers may be viewed here.

Sincerely,

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http://healthoregon.org/coronavirus