

TITLE: TEMPORARY TELECOMMUTING AND REMOTE WORK

PURPOSE: To establish University Health System guidelines for telecommuting and remote work of employees during an emergency or other unexpected circumstances. This policy applies to all Health System employees and its affiliates (University Medicine Associates, University Health System Foundation and Community First Health Plans). This is a new policy. [Key words: Temporary Telecommuting, Remote Work, Remote Work Acknowledgement.]

POLICY STATEMENT:

University Health System may allow or request employees to temporarily work from home to ensure business continuity during an emergency or other unexpected circumstances. The Health System will provide procedural guidance to both management and their employees when a temporary telecommuting or remote work arrangement is necessary.

POLICY ELABORATION:

Temporary telecommuting or remote work arrangements may be beneficial for both University Health System and its employees, including increased productivity and performance, enhanced employee recruitment and retention, relief of space constraints, cost reduction, environmental sustainability, crisis response, and work-life balance. This policy recognizes the important role our employees fulfill during an emergency or other unexpected circumstances, and offers alternative solutions to meet the needs of our community and organization with compassion and dedication.

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Employee** – Regular full and part-time employees. Part-time temporary employees may be eligible if approved by area Vice President, Department Director and the Human Resources department.

- B. **Alternate Work Location** - A location other than the normal onsite work location from which employees temporarily telecommute or work remotely (i.e. employees' homes).
- C. **Telecommuting or Remote Work** – Temporary work arrangement determined by the area Vice President and the Department Director in which eligible employees fulfill their job responsibilities at a site other than their onsite work location during regularly scheduled work hours for an indefinite or finite period. The area Vice President will obtain concurrence from their appropriate C-Suite Executive Vice President or the President/Chief Executive Officer prior to final confirmation of the temporary work arrangement.

II. ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- A. In the event of an emergency, University Health System may require certain employees to work remotely on a temporary basis. These employees will be advised of such requirements by the area Vice President and the Department Director, who will determine the estimated duration of the temporary work arrangement. **The area Vice President will obtain concurrence from their appropriate C-Suite Executive Vice President or the President/Chief Executive Officer prior to final confirmation of the temporary work arrangement.**
- B. Suitability for temporary telecommuting or remote work arrangements is based upon the employee's position and job functions, and is to be determined by the employee's Department Director and approved by the area Vice President as outlined for this policy.
- C. Temporary telecommuting or remote work arrangements, which may be long-term, short term and/or reoccurring, require the completion of University Health System's **Temporary Telecommuting and Remote Work Acknowledgement. (Attachment I)**

- D. Employees should not assume any specified period of time for the temporary telecommuting or remote work arrangements. University Health System may require employees to return to regular onsite work at any time.

III. EXPECTATIONS OF TEMPORARY TELECOMMUTER OR REMOTE WORKER

- A. Employees are required to work their normal work schedule, unless they receive prior approval from their Department Director to adjust their schedule. Employees are required to remain productive and responsive during their scheduled work hours.
- B. Employees must have a mobile or standard telephone and personal computer at their remote location.
- C. Employees must maintain a working engagement or presence with their immediate supervisor and co-workers while working remotely. Presence may be maintained by using appropriate technology including but not limited to a telephone, computer, email, messaging application, video conferencing, instant messaging, and/or text messaging. All forms of written or electronic communication must be stored and readily accessible for production. Brief summaries of telephonic communications, when appropriate, should be reduced to writing or confirmed via email. All work product should be stored and readily accessible in appropriate department “shared drive” folders.
- D. Employees are expected to maintain the same response times as if they were at their regular work location and will make themselves available to attend scheduled work meetings as required and/or requested (remotely or in-person).
- E. We understand that working from home presents a challenge if the employee is also managing child/dependent care. However, temporary telecommuting or remote work is not intended to be a replacement for dependent care. The employee must exercise good judgment in balancing work responsibilities with child/dependent care management.

In general, the work space should be segregated or defined enough to minimize disruptions during the work day.

- F. Personal tasks and errands should only be performed during the employee's scheduled breaks or at lunch time. Breaks and lunches must be scheduled based on the normal work schedule and in accordance with Health System policy as outlined in the current University Health System Employee Handbook (See Page 35).
- G. Employees are expected to establish an appropriate environment within their home for work purposes. This includes ensuring and maintaining an ergonomically appropriate and remote worksite free from safety hazards.

This policy covers a temporary alternative work arrangement available for certain jobs suitable for telecommuting or remote work. The authorization for temporary alternative work arrangements is dependent on the employee having suitable space and equipment.

University Health System is not responsible for the operating costs or technical support of any personal equipment (including, but not limited to: computers; personal devices; mobile or standard telephones), maintenance of home office space or personal equipment; or any other incidental, repairs or modification costs (utility provider costs, telephone costs or for any supply costs used in the home), associated with the use of an employee's temporary alternative work arrangement. In the event the alternative work arrangement is extended for an unforeseen period of time, the Health System may provide a limited inventory of office supplies as required to perform the essential functions of the job.

The Procurement department will establish a formal process in accordance with procurement ordering protocols should there be a need to supplement additional office supplies (excluding equipment and maintenance of equipment as outlined above).

IV. DEPARTMENT AND EMPLOYEE SUITABILITY

- A. Management will examine the needs of the department, including frequency of customer interactions and support, department functions and current assignments related to the emergency circumstances (if applicable), other departments' schedules and immediate needs, and space constraints.
- B. Management will review the employee's job description and responsibilities to determine if their position is appropriate for a telecommuting or remote work arrangement.
 - 1. Examples of jobs that may be suitable for temporary telecommuting or remote work arrangements include those that have minimal face-to-face interaction, heavy data entry tasks, specific objectives and performance standards that can easily be measured, and positions that customarily require community outreach when the daily functions are interrupted due to environmental conditions or governmental public health restrictions.
 - 2. Examples of jobs that may not be suitable for temporary telecommuting or remote work arrangements include those that require frequent face-to-face interaction and customer support or the need to access confidential documents.
- C. Management will be required to assess the performance of the employee to ensure that the employee is in good standing and to determine if the employee's work habits display the traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful temporary telecommuting and remote work, such as reliability, responsiveness, and the ability to work independently.
- D. Every effort will be made to give employees reasonable advance notice of changes to or termination of temporary telecommuting or remote work arrangements, when possible. However, the Health System reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to require employees to return to regular, onsite work at any time.

V. SCHEDULE

- A. Management will be responsible to determine the number of telecommuting or remote work days allowed each week, the work hours and schedule that the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of regular communication (i.e. phone, video conferencing, and/or in person, etc.).
- B. Employees may be required, at any time, to commute to their normal work location. This travel is considered commute time, and telecommuters, for the purposes of this temporary remote work arrangement are not eligible to receive reimbursement for this travel.
- C. Employees who are classified as non-exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), will be required to accurately record all hours worked on a daily basis using Payroll Worksheet, BCHD# 7-107-A. Worked hours must be entered by the department timekeeper on a daily basis. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the Department Director. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Health System policies and procedures.

VI. SAFEGUARDS AND HIPAA COMPLIANT REMOTE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- A. Employees will agree to maintain all Protected Health Information (PHI) and other confidential Health System business information in the strictest confidence in accordance with Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information: HIPAA Privacy Policy, #2.14.
- B. Employees will take all necessary precautions to prevent disclosure of confidential matters to unauthorized parties. If an employee learns of any unauthorized disclosure of confidential information, the employee will immediately notify the Integrity Services department of such disclosure.

- C. Employees will be expected to ensure the protection of confidential information from their remote work location. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password protection and maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job function and the environment.
- D. Employees must configure the home workstation in a safe place free of normal household traffic, hazards and other personal non-work related activities. The utilization of screen savers, passwords, anti-virus software, encryption and regular security updates is mandatory.
- E. Access to Health System information assets is restricted to authorized individuals and used only for business/management approved purposes. All requests for temporary telecommuting and remote worker access must be approved by the department director, area Vice President and the Information Services department. Access will be assigned according to the user's job function and the user must sign a confidentiality agreement. Please refer to the Information Asset/Security Use Policy #2.08.02.

VII. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Employees should not hold business visits or in-person meetings at their alternate work location at any time.
- B. Department Directors must regularly evaluate telecommuters' or remote workers' work performance to determine if the temporary arrangement is still feasible. These temporary work arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuation.
- C. Temporary telecommuters and remote workers are subject to all policies, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines and standards that are generally applicable to all other employees of the Health System, as well as all such additional policies, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines and standards that may be imposed specifically related to remote arrangements.

- D. Temporary telecommuters and remote workers shall consider the Health System as their primary employer. Consequently, temporary telecommuters and remote workers agree not to accept employment from, and not to perform duties or render services to, any person or entity other than the Health System if doing so would conflict with their ability to timely and accurately perform all work as required by the Health System.
- E. In the event of scheduled or anticipated system downtime (2 hours or less), temporary telecommuters and remote workers may choose to have a schedule adjustment or request PTO. During extended periods of scheduled or anticipated downtime (greater than 2 hours), the Department Director may require temporary telecommuters and remote workers to return to their onsite work location or another Health System location to perform other necessary duties, as requested.
- F. In the event of unscheduled or unanticipated Health System downtime of any duration, temporary telecommuters and remote workers shall immediately contact their direct supervisor for instructions, which could include the requirement to return to their onsite work location or another Health System location to perform other necessary duties as requested.
- G. In the event of unscheduled or unanticipated downtime due to the failure of temporary telecommuters' and remote workers' personal equipment (power outage, slowness, unreliable power and/or internet services), the temporary telecommuters and remote workers will be required to return to their onsite work location or another Health System location to perform necessary duties as requested. The temporary telecommuters and remote workers may request PTO from their immediate supervisor, in lieu of reporting to work for the hours of downtime due to personal equipment failures, but any such requests will be evaluated on a case by case basis by management, dependent upon the needs of the Health System at that time.
- H. Temporary telecommuters and remote workers will be required to maintain a log of all downtime issues and submit to the Department Director when requested.

- I. Temporary telecommuters and remote workers will be required to attend scheduled daily and weekly meetings (i.e., conference call or Webex), as well as any other required educational sessions or Health System functions as requested.
- J. Temporary telecommuters and remote workers are solely responsible for the tax and legal implications of the use of their alternate work location for business purposes and are solely responsible for any IRS, state, and local government regulations and restrictions.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Wage and Salary Guidelines, 4.02
Employee Handbook
Personal Use of Social Media, 4.13
Asset/Security Use Policy #2.08.02
Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM)

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer

Senior Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer
Organizational Development