

Coronavirus Update

Date: February 28, 2020

Partners Travel Advisory

This communication provides guidance to employees and all other persons of interest (volunteers, non-employed physicians, external collaborators, sponsored staff and others who visit for business related purposes) at Partners and its member institutions who are currently traveling or contemplating travel to areas with widespread transmission of COVID-19, as defined by CDC, including **China** (including Hong Kong and Macau), **Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea**. This document was prepared by Partners [TravelSafe](#), Occupational Health Services, Emergency Preparedness, MGH/BWH Infection Control leaders and Human Resources and will be updated regularly as new information becomes available.

Planned Travel:

CDC has identified China, Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea as countries with widespread or sustained community transmission. Given the current characteristics and dynamic nature of the outbreak, the Partners travel policy has been modified, **effective immediately**:

1. **No further business travel:** All Partners related business travel to China (including Hong Kong and Macau), Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea is **suspended**. If the CDC extends its travel warnings (level 2 or level 3) to additional areas, these will be included in this policy as well.
2. **No further business-related visitors:** Partners is also **suspending all business-related visits to Partners' institutions from CDC-defined impacted areas**.
 - a. As of the date of this guidance, impacted areas include all of China, Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea. Other countries and locations may be added as the situation evolves.
3. **Avoid nonessential personal travel:** All employees and other persons of interest are **strongly encouraged to avoid nonessential personal travel** to these areas. This travel is not part of employer-related work in relation to Partners and its members, and **Partners employees will be furloughed upon their return date**.
4. Personnel who traveled to China (including Hong Kong and Macau), **Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea** and returned in the preceding 14 days or who elect to travel to China (including Hong Kong and Macau), **Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea** are required to do the following:
 - a. **Complete OHS Travel Survey.** All individuals traveling to China (including Hong Kong and Macau), Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea and CDC defined Level 2 or 3 areas are required to complete the [Returning Travel Activity Survey](#) before returning to work. Occupational Health will review the survey results and contact the employee with a return to work date.
 - b. **Furlough.** Partners Employees will be furloughed for 14 days following their return date. All other persons of interest will be restricted from visiting Partners institutions for 14 days.

- c. **Use of PTO, Earned Time, or Sick Time.** Employees who traveled to China as of January 30 (including Hong Kong and Macau) or South Korea as of February 26 or Iran, Italy or Japan as of February 29, and thereafter, will be required to use their own accrued sick time or vacation time, per their institution's policy on the use of time during a leave of absence, to cover the lost wages due to the furlough. Employees should consider this furlough period and the availability of sufficient accrued sick or vacation time before deciding whether to travel.

Personnel returning from Travel to China, Hong Kong, Macau who left the U.S. prior to January 30, 2020; personnel returning from travel to South Korea who left the U.S. prior to February 26, 2020; and personnel returning from travel to Iran, Italy or Japan who left the U.S. after February 29, 2020 will be subject to all the above conditions but will be eligible to receive compensation during the furlough.

Exposure to COVID-19 Patients Outside of Partners Institutions

At times, through other employment or volunteer positions, Partners employees are asked to participate in the care of patients outside of Partners duties. Partners employees in these roles who have contact with a known or suspected COVID-19 patient or an individual quarantined by public health authorities outside of Partners facilities will also be furloughed for 14 days following their last date of potential COVID-19 exposure.