**Monsoon Asians & Pacific Islanders in Solidarity**

**Policies & Protocols:**

**Response to COVID-19**

Due to concerns about the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak and reported cases in Iowa, Monsoon will follow the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines:

* **Sick employees should stay home:**
  + Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
  + **Our sick leave policies will be flexible and consistent with public health guidance.**
  + **Staff members with no accrued sick time/leave should consult with their supervisor to discuss any shared leave/leave donation policy and process to access the benefit.**
  + You are permitted to stay home to care for a sick family member.
* **Sick employees:**
  + **Employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e., cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should go home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).**
* **In case of community transmission or staff exposure**
  + Monsoon staff will work remotely, and close Monsoon offices, if local schools close due to community transmission of named pandemic illness (e.g., COVID-19). Do not come into the office if you live outside of the area and the public school in your community closes, although Monsoon offices may remain open. The office closures will remain in effect during the duration of the school closures. Any updates and changes to the status of the office closures will be sent via email and group text. Remember to take your computer and other work-related materials home with you after the end of work hours.
  + Monsoon staff will also work remotely and be closed to the public if anyone on staff or their family has contact with someone who has been exposed to or contracts pandemic illness. The office closure will likely continue for a 14-day period.
  + Designated staff will post the office closure information on Monsoon’s FB page and website. Staff may want to add it to the signature line of their email.
  + If any staffers need to access the office during a closure, they will take contact precautions and disinfect as necessary.
  + When working remotely, use the Monsoon staff text thread, email and Zoom to communicate internally and with outside organizations, meetings and trainings.
* **All employees:**
  + Should follow the [cough and sneeze etiquette](about:blank), and [hand hygiene](about:blank) at the office’s entrance and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
  + Should use tissues, and no-touch disposal receptacles are available for you to use.
  + Should clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
  + Are urged to visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](about:blank)and [clean hands webpage](about:blank) for more information.
  + Must maintain at least a 3-foot space between themselves and other individuals.
* **Perform routine environmental cleaning:**
  + Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
  + Wash dishes in hot, soapy water.
  + Help keep all contact surfaces disinfected every day.
  + Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.
* **Employees before traveling to take certain steps:**
  + Check the [CDC’s Traveler’s Health Notices](about:blank) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from China, and information for air crew, can be found at on the [CDC website](about:blank).
  + Employees should check for symptoms of [acute respiratory illness](about:blank) before starting travel and notify their supervisor, or stay home if they are sick.
  + Employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
  + If outside the United States, sick employees should follow Monsoon’s medical insurance policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.
* **Additional measures in response to currently occurring sporadic importations of COVID-19:**
  + Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and refer to the CDC guidance for [how to conduct a risk assessment](about:blank) of their potential exposure.
  + If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to CDC guidance for [how to conduct a risk assessment](about:blank) of their potential exposure.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS:**

**Community events will be cancelled until further notice and will be rescheduled after the COVID-19 outbreak ends.**

**DIRECT SERVICES:**

A crisis like COVID-19 should not override our commitment to advocate well-being. Advocates should not have to risk infection to do their jobs. Advocates should be able to be “off-duty” to make sure they are properly nourishing themselves and resting – both key points given by public health officials to maintain a strong immune system. (*from NNEDV*)

* Staff will provide services to survivors based on their needs and safety but will limit in-person meetings. Staff should try to meet with survivors via phone and video conferencing as much as possible. Staff are not allowed to pick up survivors from home or drive them to appointments until the COVID-19 outbreak eases, but rather contact a taxi service or Uber/Lyft for assistance, using victim service funds.
* Staff should limit in-person direct services to “essential” ones, such as court hearings, legal and other urgent appointments, mediation and emergency shelter requirements.
* When required to meet in person with victims, staff must ensure all parties follow the CDC safety guidelines of washing hands and maintaining a “safe” distance from one another.
* Staff should try to coordinate and co-advocate with other service providers long-distance as much as possible. This includes working with SANEs and hospitals, taking into account the safety of survivors and self as well as the rules and regulations of other entities.
* Staff should avail of office laptops and work remotely in a safe space, but if they wish to use their sick leave, they should get approval from a supervisor.
* Staff can use the time away from the office workplace to attend work-related webinars, make community outreach plans, finish office paperwork and keep in touch online or over their office cell phones with victims. Especially if survivors need counseling or health guidance at this time, staff should keep themselves well informed about resources so that survivors can access them easily.
* Those staffers who do not have office cell phones should not use personal phones to engage with victims.
* Print out any information of resources at the workplace, put them in a binder and take them with you when away from the office. That will ensure trust from survivors and your own self-confidence as an advocate.
* All staffers who are not on sick leave, but are working away from the workplace, must be available for communication online or over the phone with one another through their usual work hours.
* Staff should direct/refer survivors for such services as affordable housing, LIHEAP meetings, job interviews, etc., to the site of the related needs -- but staff must offer to provide phone interpretation during these occurrences.
* If staffers require a signed consent to release information form, they can first get a verbal release if they are not interacting face-to-face with survivors, and then later get a signed copy.

**REMINDER: Confidentiality**

* A program receiving Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) or Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) funds CANNOT disclose survivors’ personally identifying information, unless mandated to do so by a statute or court order.
* If there is a state statute requiring that a COVID-19 (or any other identified infectious disease) report be made to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or a state or local health department, then that report should be made in accordance with the law.
* As with other types of legally mandated reports, advocate should make reasonable efforts to have the survivor make the report; if the survivor chooses not to make the report, the advocate should communicate with the survivor that the program staff will have to make the report, and help the survivor prepare or plan for that as necessary.
* Staff will absolutely NOT disclose anyone’s health status, including that of co-workers and their families, outside of a legal mandate.