

We are all navigating our way through what we hope is the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and public health crisis. While Louisiana has been particularly hard hit by COVID-19, we do have one distinct advantage—we are a resilient people, strengthened by our experience in coping with disasters such as hurricanes and floods.

We know how to take a hit, get up and get going.

Louisiana businesses must now do exactly that – get going again. Fortunately, our medical and scientific community has been able to bring vaccines to market at record speed; vaccines that have very high rates of protection against the disease. It's important we create immunity for both ourselves and our community now. We're getting closer to the shoreline of a new normal, and the vaccines and continued safety precautions will help us navigate our way there safely! In fact, one of our top priorities needs to be the safety of our employees and our customers. So, as we work toward returning Louisiana's workforce completely, we must continue to focus effort on preventing and managing COVID-19 in the workplace.

To help with this, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana has updated our virtual toolkit that can serve as a resource as you plan for a safe reentry into your workplace. It includes information from our medical directors on prevention and testing, steps to take if employees test positive for infection, FAQs, behavioral health resources, templates for communicating with employees about COVID-19 and more. We hope you find this information useful.

As one of the largest employers in Louisiana, we understand the circumstances and potential problems you are facing as you bring your employees back to the workplace. We continue to evolve safety procedures for our own organization and have created a conservative reentry plan with guidance from our medical directors and other outside experts.

For instance, we are applying stringent social distancing rules on our campus, which means reworking some employee workspaces to ensure distance. Use of common areas and in-person meetings are being restricted, and we are requiring temperature checks and protective equipment like masks for those on campus. We are also encouraging those who can work from home effectively to continue to do so to help limit contact and potential exposure to the virus.

I understand each business is unique with its own special circumstances, but I hope the information in this toolkit might be helpful for your business as you create a workplace safety plan for your employees. Even with our best efforts, we are going to be dealing with long-term effects of COVID-19 for the foreseeable future, and our return to "normal" will take time, patience and resilience.

Despite the challenges ahead, I know we will get through this difficult time together and emerge stronger. It's what we do in Louisiana, and it's that same spirit of resilience that will get us up and going.

Stay well and stay safe.

I. Steven Udvarhelyi M.D.
President and CEO
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana