



iVET360°

# COVID-19 TOWN HALL

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR PRACTICE

# Agenda:

- Brief review of HR 6201  
*(also known as the Families First Coronavirus Response Act)*
- Current information on payroll tax credits
- Overview of employer-specific items in the CARES Act
- Q&A with Heather!

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## What is it?

- The FFCRA was signed into law by President Trump on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- A comprehensive relief bill aimed at softening the financial fallout of COVID-19 on families.
- Eligible employees are those who work for an employer with fewer than 500 employees. **\*\*THIS MEANS ALL ANIMAL HOSPITALS!\*\***

*This law goes into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 and sunsets on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.*

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## What does this mean for my practice?

To better understand the FFCRA, we will be breaking it down into 3 parts.

**Part 1 – Emergency Family Leave (Expanded FMLA)**

**Part 2 – Emergency Paid Sick Leave**

**Part 3 – Tax credits for Parts 1 & 2**

*\*Please note, we will be doing a high level overview but still highly encourage you to read through our FFCRA document that goes into further detail.*

# **HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)***

## **Part 1 – Emergency Family Leave (Expanded FMLA)**

Applies to employees that have been employed for at least 30 days who can't work (or telework) because their child's school or childcare service is closed due to a COVID-19 emergency declared by a federal, state or local authority.

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQs

### Exemptions

- Will likely only apply to very very small practices
- Will ONLY apply to the 12 week child care aspect
- Based on these criteria:
  - The money spent on sick and expanded FMLA would exceed revenues
  - The absence of the employee would cause a substantial risk (PROVABLE!) to the financial health of the company **because of specialized skills, business knowledge, or responsibilities**
  - There would not be enough other employees to perform the necessary labor

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQs

### Exemptions

IF your practice operates on an assumed exempt basis, and this is declined, the practice will have to pay back pay to those employees who qualify for and took the expanded FMLA.

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQs

Paid leave begins on April 1, 2020

Technically, medical notes are required

- Most employees can't get them
- Most employees can't get tested
- Recommend acting in good faith and telling employees that they may need to provide documentation after the crisis is over.



# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQs

### FFCRA and Essential Businesses/ Essential Employees

- The FFCRA does state that essential employees are exempt from obtaining FFCRA leave
- However, while veterinary practices are considered essential, **it only means that the business is allowed to stay open per the state**

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQs

- Essential EMPLOYEES are people who are employed by a HUMAN health care facility or research institution.
- Veterinary employees are, in general, NOT exempt from FFCRA

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQs

- The only family members who are covered are those that are an employee's ***own children***. Grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc. are NOT covered.
- EFMLA is NOT in addition to typical 12-week FMLA, it is concurrent
- Intermittent extended FMLA verbiage was intentionally removed from the final law, so assume all FMLA allowances for intermittent FMLA apply

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQs

- If both parents are home, you could ***theoretically*** push back against someone claiming they need to take EFMLA to care for a child. \*\*Be careful here!\*\*
- Finally.... DO NOT OFFER CHILD CARE FOR YOUR EMPLOYEE'S CHILDREN!

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQ's: Is this paid?

- The first 10 days of the expanded FMLA leave may be unpaid; however, employees may elect to substitute available PTO or sick leave.
- After the initial 10 days, employees are eligible for at least two-thirds of their regular rate of pay based on the number of hours they would otherwise have been scheduled to work.
- This paid Expanded FMLA will cover eligible employees for a period of 12 weeks.

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## Part 2 – Emergency Paid Sick Leave

- All employees, *regardless of how long they have worked for the employer*, are eligible for paid sick leave if they are unable to work (or telework) due to COVID-19.
- Full-time employees must be provided with up to 80 hours of paid sick leave.
- Part-time employees are entitled to paid sick leave based on the number of hours they work, on average, over a two-week period.
- **The EPSL is in addition to any sick time that your already provide**

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## What are the Qualifying reasons for leave?

1. The employee is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID–19.
2. The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID–19.
3. The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID–19 and **seeking a medical diagnosis**.
4. The employee is caring for an individual who is subject to either number 1 or 2 above.
5. The employee is caring for their child due to COVID closures.
6. The employee is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the secretary of health and human services.

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## FAQ

### What are the pay requirements?

- Paid sick leave must be paid at the employee's regular rate of pay, or minimum wage, whichever is greater, for leave taken for reasons 1-3 (from the previous slide).
- An Employee taking leave for reasons 4-6 may be compensated at two-thirds of his or her regular rate of pay, or minimum wage, whichever is greater.

### Can we require the employee to utilize their other paid leave available?

No, you cannot require an employee to use other paid leave first.



# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## Sick Time FAQ

- ONLY applies to individuals who are sick or otherwise qualify under the 6 criteria
- People who are afraid to come in, but otherwise healthy and low-risk, do NOT qualify.
- If an employee lives with someone who is a high risk, then this could be considered a qualifying reason (under item 2 or item 4)
- This leave is for full time, part time, and exempt employees.
- Again, starts April 2, is NOT retroactive

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## Part 3 – Tax Credits for Parts 1 & 2

Our understanding is that the tax credits will amount to a 1 to 1 reimbursement to the employer for the dollar amount paid to the employee through Parts 1 & 2.

As of now, it appears this tax credit will be paid out in the form of refundable credits for the 6.2 percent Social Security tax component of payroll taxes. These will be subject to daily and aggregate caps

# HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)*

## Part 3 – Tax Credits for Parts 1 & 2

Tax credits will be refundable, which means if you pay too much, you will receive a check as refund.

Health insurance costs ARE INCLUDED in these tax credits

The IRS has stated that these credits may be applied towards federal income tax payments, social security payments, and more

**\*\*Discuss your specific situation directly with your accountant and/or iVET360 Analyst!!\*\***

# **HR 6201 aka: *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)***

## **Part 3 – Tax Credits for Parts 1 & 2**

We are HIGHLY RECOMMENDING that you assign someone specifically to track the money paid to employees for EFMLA and COVID-related sick time. This is VERY important!

# **S-3548aka: *The CARES Act***

*AKA Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act*

## **What is it?**

- The FFCRA was signed into law by President Trump on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- A comprehensive relief bill aimed at softening the fallout of COVID-19 on families.
- Benefits for individuals, employees, and employers

# **S-3548aka: *The CARES Act***

## *AKA Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act*

- Benefits for Businesses
  - SBA loan program (Paycheck Protection Act)
    - Up to \$10 million per business
    - Will be accessible through your bank
    - Much of these can be forgiven IF practices pay employees at NORMAL LEVELS for at least 8 weeks following loan origination
    - Can begin applying for these on April 3<sup>rd</sup> by filling out the attached form and submitting it to your bank, or start at <https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/>.
    - We will discuss this more on our webinar Tuesday at 10am Pacific time

# **S-3548aka: *The CARES Act***

## *AKA Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act*

- Benefits for Businesses
  - Emergency Grants
    - Meant to cover immediate operating costs, including sick leave costs
    - Grants can be up to \$10,000
    - Can begin application at <https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/>
  - Relief for Existing Loans
    - Meant to cover six months of loan payments for businesses with existing SBA loans
    - Can inquire about this to your loan originator

# HOW DO WE KEEP OUR **STAFF HEALTHY,** **CLIENTS SAFE, AND BUSINESS OPEN?**

Ultimately, your best course of action is to minimize direct contact with clients and to ramp up cleaning/disinfecting protocols on a massive scale.

**LET'S DIVE INTO SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES!**



# Taking Employee Temperatures

To ensure the safety of your staff and your clients, we recommend taking the following into consideration:

- **WHO** – Designate a person, from your leadership team, who is on shift.
- **TRAINING** – Ensure that the designated employee understands how to safely check a temperature, utilizing appropriate PPE.
- **EQUIPMENT** – Ensure the temperature checker has appropriate PPE and, preferably, an infrared digital thermometer.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY** - To ensure that all staff feel as though their privacy has been protected, we suggest employees wait in their vehicle or line up (being mindful of social distancing!) out of sight of clients.

# Taking Employees Temperatures

## What do I do if an employee has a fever?

- Good Question! You are able to send that employee home on a 14 day quarantine; however, we do recommend that you pay that employee for the day to limit any legal ramifications (some states it is mandatory to pay employees for partial days; check your state laws regarding this).
- Employers must maintain all information about employee illness as a confidential medical record in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

# Taking Employees Temperatures

## Keep in mind...

- Up to 25% of people will exhibit no symptoms, including fever
- Taking temperatures does **NOT** guarantee that an infected person will not be in the practice.
- “Security theater:” If it makes people more comfortable, then it won’t hurt anything.

# Curbside Service

## What is Curbside Service?

- Essentially, client calls practice when they arrive
- Receptionist or technician goes to car, obtains history, and brings patient into practice
- Doctor talks to owner during exam via speakerphone
- When exam and treatments are complete, technician brings patient back to client and collects payment

# Curbside Service

## Benefits:

- Limits the number of clients who come into your practice
- Limits direct contact between doctors and staff and clients
- Makes clients feel more secure not being in a closed space with team members

# Curbside Service

## Risks:

- Large risk of patients getting loose in parking lot, increased risk of injury
- Risk of injury to team members going out to car to get patients

# Curbside Service

## Recommendations

- Make sure clients are made fully aware of protocol
- Make sure you have double or even triple leash protocols
- All small pets (small dogs, cats, exotics) MUST be in carriers; bring carriers to car for owner to place pet in with doors closed if necessary
- Train team on looking out for dangers in parking lot
- Train team on what to do if a patient gets loose
- Train team on how to explain payment process to clients (some may be concerned about handing off their credit card)

# Curbside Service

## Recommendations

- Have a plan in place for emergencies and euthanasias (these clients may need to be allowed in the practice)
- Create a protocol for PPE for in-hospital staff and “car runners”



# Q&A with Heather

And now, the time you have all been waiting for.....

**Question and Answer time with Heather!**

Instead of “questions and answers,” will be providing rapid-fire answers that cover broad spectrums of questions.

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# Question 1: When can they come back to work?

Team members who have been out due to confirmed or assumed COVID-19 infection should meet the following criteria:

- Fever free (without medication) for 72 hours
- Gradual reduction in other symptoms for 72 hours
- 7 days have passed since onset of symptoms

If a doctor releases them back to work before this criteria is met, we recommend asking them to stay home until that time

# Question 2: Layoffs, Furloughs and other terrors

- Furlough:
  - Alternative to a layoff, requires a reduction in hours or a specific amount of unpaid time off.
  - Example: full time employee may be asked to work only 4 days per week instead of 5 for a specified period of time
  - Can exclude people who are more “essential”
  - Must continue maintaining employee’s benefits
  - Should qualify for unemployment
  - Some states have a “work share” program, where the state pays partial unemployment
    - Check with your state’s unemployment entity for more information (more on this later)

# Question 2: Layoffs, Furloughs and other terrors

- Layoff
  - Temporary or permanent separation from payroll
  - Typically, employer believes that the conditions will change and laid off employees will be able to return.
  - Must follow all state and local final paycheck regulations
  - Can recall (reinstate) people who were laid off, but not required
  - Laid off employees are nearly always eligible for unemployment

# Question 2: Layoffs, Furloughs and other terrors

- Reduction in Force (RIF)
  - Creates a permanent cut in headcount
  - Layoff turns into RIF if hospital chooses to permanently not replace the position
  - Must follow all state and local final pay laws
  - Employee nearly always eligible for unemployment

# Question 2: Layoffs, Furloughs and other terrors: What other options?

- Start by asking if anyone wants to cut their hours or take unpaid leave
  - Many times, this alone can help heavily reduce costs
- Next, be honest with your team
  - Tell them how many hours you need to cut
  - Tell them you are trying to avoid laying anyone off
  - Ask for their help coming up with solutions/ suggestions
  - Most teams will want to work together to share the burden as opposed to losing people

# Question 3: Can someone volunteer to be laid off?

- Not without the practice owner or practice manager asking for volunteers
  - Right: Manager: “Team, we need to lay off three people for X reasons, if there is anyone who would like to volunteer, please come let me know.”
    - THEN: Employee: “I would like to volunteer to be laid off”
  - Wrong: “I would like to be laid off, please”

# Question 3: How is unemployment working right now?

Short answer: not very efficiently

*Long answer:*

*During height of recession: 625,000 people applied for unemployment per week.*

*Last week, 6.6 MILLION people applied*

Sites are breaking down, processing is slow



# Question 3: How is unemployment working right now?

What can we do?

- *Encourage team members to keep trying*
  - Eventually they will work through the backlog and will likely get back pay for the delay time
- That's it
  - Employers cannot help employees with unemployment claims
- Also...
  - If an employee gets sick after you have laid them off, you don't have to pay FFCRA time

# Question 3: How is unemployment working right now?

NOTE: Some employees may get more money being unemployed!

- *State unemployment*
- *Additional \$600 per week unemployment*
- *Up to \$1200 per person stimulus checks*

***DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!***

# Question 5: Work Share?

- Many states offer a work-share program
- Hospital must apply for this, NOT employee
- Usually...
  - Must select 3 or more employees with reduced hours to participate
  - Hours must be cut a certain amount (i.e. Oregon is 20-40%)
  - Employees must have worked at least full time for 6 months or part time for 12 months
  - Weekly claims are submitted by the employer
  - For more information, check with your state unemployment office

# Question 6: Employee Situations

If an employee tests positive for COVID:

- Place them on FFCRA sick leave (up to 80 hours)
- Let team know someone in hospital has tested positive, recommend they seek medical attention
- CDC recommends any team member who worked closely with individual be put on leave as well (very small practices may need to close)

**iVET630 Recommendation: Send an email to clients who have been in practice in the last 2 weeks that they may have been exposed to an employee who has tested positive, recommend they seek medical attention**

# Question 6: Employee Situations

## Pregnant employees

- **There has been no additional guidance on pregnant women**
- **Follow Pregnancy Discrimination Act guidelines, treat them the same as everyone else**

## High-Risk Employees

- **Employees with medical conditions or lives with someone with medical conditions should only be placed on leave if they have a doctor recommendation to do so**
- **Employees who work with ER doctors, nurses, etc. should be allowed to come to work UNLESS their SO exhibits symptoms or tests positive.**

# Finally: How do I improve morale?

Let's face it, employee morale is likely not great right now

We can't pay them more, but we can keep them engaged and focused on mission.

Here are some suggestions

# Finally: How do I improve morale?

- Be honest and OVERCOMMUNICATE!
- Reviewing your mission statement and core behaviors ***routinely***
- Asking what they have done to exemplify them
- Discussing the hospital's “why”, and their personal “why”
- Create and utilize a recognition board (manager to employee is best, but peer to peer might also work right now too)
- Recognition apps (Bonusly, etc.)

# Finally: How do I improve morale?

- Question of the day board
  - Quarantine theme:
    - Once the restrictions are lifted ,where is the first place you'll go?
    - Which coffee shop are you missing right now?
    - What is the first restaurant you will go to when restrictions are lifted
  - Hospital quarantine theme
    - What have we changed that you want to continue when restrictions are lifted?
    - What has made you want to go to work each morning recently?
  - Fun/ Goofy questions
    - Pet photo contests
    - “What was your first car,” (with photo), etc.



# We made it!

Thank you so much for attending our Town Hall. Our next Town Hall is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 10am PST.**

Ensure you stay tuned to our COVID Resource Website here:

[covid19.ivet360.com](https://covid19.ivet360.com)

Visit the website below to sign up for additional HR Support regarding COVID-19

<https://ivet360.com/hr/>

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