



GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR HEALTHY WORKPLACES

Navigating the Coronavirus Crisis - Implications for the Workplace *Summary of Global Alliance for Healthy Workplaces Discussion on April 7*

The Global Centre for Healthy Workplaces (www.globalhealthyworkplace.org) hosted a live discussion with Global Alliance for Healthy Workplaces members on the topic of how the Coronavirus crisis is affecting the workplace and what employers are doing to address the massive challenges. Participants joined the webinar from across the globe including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU OSHA), Optum, Institute of Employment Studies and Global Healthy Workplace Awards winners such as Unilever and Chevron.

While organisations shared their experience with regard to the spread of the virus and lockdown policies the focus rapidly shifted to existing resources and programs helping workplaces and employees in this crisis. For employers the implementation of emergency response and business continuity plans remain key priorities as well as providing resilience tools, employee assistance programs (EAP) and ergonomics programs for the majority of employees working from home. In addition, helping communities, e.g. local hospitals, was mentioned as a key activity.

Addressing anxiety and mental wellbeing in relation to the pandemic is becoming increasingly important as employees are dealing with stress from many sources (family, work, global crisis). The Working from Home Wellbeing Survey from the UK-based Institute of Employment Studies (www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/ies-working-home-wellbeing-survey) is investigating the effects of homeworking on employee wellbeing. Interim findings from the initial 500 respondents to the survey include:

- a significant increase in musculoskeletal complaints;
- 50% reported not being happy with their current work-life balance and 33% frequently feel isolated;
- a deterioration of diet and exercise as well as an increase in alcohol consumption;
- 64% reported a loss of sleep due to worry.

The survey remains open for the duration of April. Please watch out for the next Global Alliance webinar on the survey results.

Another key issue discussed was what a “return to normalcy” would look like for the workforce. While difficult to predict at this stage it was made clear that employers need

to better prepare for a potential second wave of the Coronavirus and other future pandemics and that this crisis would leave many companies in a dire financial situation directly impacting employees (loss of job, loss of benefits, reduced schedules, lower pay, etc.).

Numerous excellent resources were shared during the discussion, which are featured at the Global Centre COVID-19 Resource Hub at www.globalhealthyworkplace.org/news-media/coronavirus-covid-19-resource-hub/).

The Global Alliance is a global network of leading stakeholders from various sectors who seek to enhance workplace health and wellbeing on a global scale and is hosted by the Global Centre for Healthy Workplaces. For more information go to or contact info@globalhealthyworkplace.org.