

April 1, 2020

Dear DotHouse Health Team Members,

These past few weeks have brought a lot of change in the world and our country, and I am deeply appreciative for all of your hard work and dedication to our mission and our community in these challenging times. It is you, our dedicated employees, who make our health center so special, and we are committed to finding the best way to take care of you in these difficult times. As things are changing by the hour, the Executive Leadership team has been continually meeting and adjusting our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the last few weeks, we've all seen that many of our patients have cancelled nonessential appointments and are not coming to the health center. We need to respond in order to survive, preserve your jobs, prioritize your health and safety, and respect the CDC's recommendations for social distancing in order to contain the spread of COVID-19 while maintaining many of the essential health services we provide to our community.

Considering all the factors, we are making the very difficult decision to put many employees on furlough—meaning that the health center is temporarily reducing operations across the center. **This is not a lay-off.** We are planning on at least a four-week reduction in operations, beginning on April 5, 2020. We will reassess the situation after the initial four weeks.

While operations are restricted now, I want to assure all furloughed employees that we will do everything in our power to resume full operations in the future. DotHouse has a proud 133 year history and we are strong and I know that we will make it through this challenging period.

Below, please find more details on what a furlough will entail:

Compensation

- Furloughed employees may use up to 2 weeks of their Earned Time at the onset of the furlough. If they do not have sufficient accrued time to do so, up to 2 weeks of Earned Time may be advanced. Should the Employee already have a negative Earned Time balance, the maximum amount cannot exceed 2 weeks.
- Unless they use accrued Earned Time at their own option, furloughed employees will not be paid during this furlough and we do not expect anyone to perform any work for the health center.
- Furloughed employees may apply for unemployment effective 4/5/2020 at: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-unemployment-benefits>; We advise taking this step as soon as possible. Please be advised that if you do use your accrued Earned Time, it may affect your ability to receive unemployment benefits.

Benefits

- *A furlough is not considered a termination*, and all employees who have health insurance through the health center will remain on the health center's health insurance plan.

- DotHouse will cover the health insurance premiums (both employer & employee) during the 4 week furlough. This will be reevaluated at the end of the 4 week furlough period.
- All other benefits will be “frozen” as of midnight on your last day worked. You will not have coverage, nor will you have to pay any premiums. When you return to work, you can pick the coverage back up at that time.
- If you participate in the FSA plan, it “freezes” as well. You can continue to get reimbursed for expenses incurred prior to the furlough, but not for claims incurred during the furlough. Upon return to work, we will calculate the total amount of deductions you missed and spread that out over the remainder of the year. You will then be able to submit claims incurred during the furlough.

Regarding your personal health and safety while you are not working:

- Please take care of yourselves and notify a doctor immediately if you feel sick
- If you come into contact with someone who is diagnosed with Coronavirus, here is a link to the CDC website listing symptoms and what to do in the event you come down with symptoms **COVID-19 symptoms from the CDC:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>
- If you are diagnosed with Coronavirus, please contact Zaranique Pope in Human Resources at 617-740-2226 or call your Executive Leader so we can notify anyone who might additionally be at risk.

Furloughed employees should gather their personal belongings by Saturday, April 4, 2020, return your ID badge to your manager and should not return to work until instructed to do so. DotHouse Health communications to you will be made via email or by telephone. It is important to us that your transition into furlough and back to work goes as smoothly as possible. Therefore, if you have any questions or concerns regarding these transitions, contact Human Resources.

This was not an easy decision to make, but I do feel that in the long run, it is in the best interests of all of you, our patients and our community. My hope is that with many organizations making the socially responsible choice to reduce operations, we will come back stronger and united.

As always, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. We thank you for your patience and dedication to our community and to the health center.

With heartfelt thanks and deep admiration,



Michelle Nadow
Chief Executive Officer