Dear PAVIR Employees and PIs,

In facing the COVID-19 pandemic, we have implemented telecommuting and have restricted onsite activities. We appreciate your flexibility, adaptability, collaboration and cooperation. This communication is to let you know that PAVIR stands with you, dedicated to preserving your health and wellbeing while doing our best to safely preserve impactful research.

With the evolving situation and the passage of Federal and State legislation, including the Families First Coronavirus Response Act which goes into effect on April 1, 2020, work schedules, payroll, sponsored research activities and funding policies are being adapted. This email explains the current situation, and we will amend and communicate as situations and circumstances warrant.

PAVIR.org website:

The PAVIR website explains our evolving operating procedures during the crisis at https://pavir.org/resources/covid-19/

PAVIR support:

PAVIR's administrative functions – HR, Contracts & Grants administration, Finance & Accounting, Purchasing, IT – are continuing to provide full service remotely, yet some delays and interruptions may occur for unexpected reasons.

Communication:

More than ever, it is essential that research staff and PIs communicate regularly. Expectations should be mutually understood. At this time, lab management should sensitively resolve questions regarding how their research group will sustain essential activities (like maintaining an animal colony); care should be taken to recognize signs of emotional distress in your staff and to address their concerns and fears. No new lines of investigation should be initiated during this hiatus. Please involve PAVIR HR or C&G if challenges emerge with these group discussions.

Work hours and payroll:

With respect to staff work hours and payroll, all changes and guidance apply to both exempt and non-exempt staff. Staff are expected to work their standard work schedule unless, together with their supervisor, they decide otherwise. PAVIR will currently pay people for the standard work hours, even if their actual work time may deviate from their regular work schedule. Most sponsors, such as the NIH, the State of California and some foundations, are allowing full pay for scientific staff even though a full work week is not possible. For PIs with limited budgets that feel significantly compromised by the continuation of full pay, other options may be vacation time and furloughs (which can be for some or all work hours), although we expect this will only be necessary in rare cases. Use of sick time to cover shortage in work hours is not a viable option with limited PI funding because sick time is charged to funding sources in the same way that salary is charged (while vacation pay has been funded as it accrued.) If some work time is nonproductive while salary is being maintained, then employees and supervisors should agree on entering in what would normally be the employee's scheduled work times.

Furloughs, which we anticipate being rare occurrences, provide an opportunity to keep staff employed while they can pursue unemployment benefits through the State's Employment Development Department (EDD). The State of California is providing considerable latitude regarding unemployment benefits while on furlough, whether full or part-time. We have decided during this pandemic response time that PAVIR will continue to provide benefits proportional to an employee's standard work hours. PAVIR's insurance carriers have indicated that furloughed employees' coverage can continue if premiums are paid, which PAVIR intends to cover. This means that even if one's work hours are reduced due to a furlough, one will continue to have access to medical benefits if previously eligible. In these situations, PAVIR will pay both the employer and employee premium. I urge staff to apply for and use unemployment compensation as needed.

It remains important that staff and supervisors maintain completed timecards. We need to pay staff appropriately for overtime, yet overtime must be approved by the supervisor ***prior*** to working it. Non-exempt employees need to continue being mindful of the required meal breaks, as usual, although we realize work schedules may change which is understandable and acceptable.

For clinical study coordinators, work hours may be reduced because the studies are not as active. In these cases, furloughs and applying for unemployment benefits are an excellent way to maintain salary. And as noted above, PAVIR will continue to provide medical benefits according to the standard work schedule.

Instructions for PIs and supervisors:

In the rare cases where PIs or supervisors need to reduce employee work hours and place staff on partial or full furloughs, please inform impacted staff and also email hr@pavir.org, so that updates to employment status can be noted in our internal systems.

PAVIR needs to know who is telecommuting during this period. In previous communications we asked that PIs or their lab managers compile a list of those telecommuting and submit it, with updates as needed, to Lisa Clark, HR Director, at lclark@pavir.org. Currently, we are not requiring any additional paperwork. Please continue to provide updates.

In addition, we have previously communicated that you should ramp down your on-site research activities, and I appreciate your efforts to do this. Only essential personnel dedicated to critical laboratory functions should be permitted into the laboratories and research areas. All others should work from home. While we recognize that the determination of essential personnel will vary from laboratory to laboratory and research group to research group, you should take all possible steps to minimize the number of essential personnel designated in any one laboratory or research group. They should spend the minimum amount of time possible in your laboratory or research area. You should also minimize the number of individuals in your laboratory or research area at any moment in time.

You can get the latest research information from NIH at https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus

Reminders for all:

When conducting essential on-site research functions practice self-care and workspace cleaning. Coordinate with coworkers to minimize time on-site and time spent physically co-working with others, maintaining a distance of at least six feet from others when possible, keeping lab safety in mind. Any potentially hazardous operations still require that at least two trained and qualified persons be present.

As previously communicated, staff should come on-site and to the labs only for essential activities. Essential on-site research functions include the following.

- Completing lab continuity and emergency preparedness plans. If you still need to complete and submit your lab continuity plan, please do so today. You may find this shutdown checklist https://ehs.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/Lab-Shutdown-Checklist.pdf from Stanford helpful.
- Conducting critical maintenance procedures that require regular attention from a person to maintain laboratory viability. For example, providing animal support, maintaining shared computational equipment, and maintaining equipment that requires gas or cryogen monitoring/service, such as deep-storage freezers, electron microscopes, mass spectrometers, and incubators.
- COVID-19 research that has the potential to mitigate the spread of the pandemic.
- Ongoing treatment studies that provide essential therapeutic support for our patients, or where cessation of the treatment could negatively impact patient outcomes, can continue with in-person visits.
- Clinical research that obtains critical, in-person observations or laboratory measures on vulnerable patients or populations where not obtaining these observations could negatively impact patient safety, can continue as usual with in-person visits. Any non-essential visits or follow-up visits for these essential treatment trials or clinical observational studies should be postponed or conducted virtually where possible.
- COVID-19 research that has the potential to mitigate the spread of the pandemic.
- See attached ORD guidance.

Veterinary care will continue, as the health and welfare of research animals are essential. Essential personnel, designated by the PI, are expected to continue coming to the animal facilities as required by protocols, and perform procedures necessary for animal health and welfare. Other non-medical service centers are on temporary hiatus, except for support of essential research functions as described above.

Essential clinical research includes:

https://www.coronavirus.gov

You can get the latest public health information from the CDC at https://www.coronavirus.gov/.

We hope that your remote research activities flourish during this time and that you stay intellectually and close with your coworkers. Social distancing is the best tool we have now to combat COVID-19 transmission. The goal here is to sustain laboratories such that we can return to research when appropriate, not to conduct new experiments. Please minimize all laboratory studies and do not initiate new animal work.

This is a difficult moment for everybody. We’re all trying to adjust our lives and plans while doing all we can to

safeguard public health and the wellbeing of those around us. I want to thank everyone for working together in doing what's right even though it means giving up things we cherish.

Clear-headed, calm, and generous, we will get through this. Stay safe and practice self-care.

Mike Hindery

References:

https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural_disasters/corona-virus.htm

https://ehs.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/Lab-Shutdown-Checklist.pdf

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf

https://www.vitacompanies.com/hubfs/6.%20Documents/COVID-19/COVID-19%20Legislation%20Notification%20of%20New%20Benefits%20to%20Employees.pdf?utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=85113543&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9eRkE7BmzRnMdqo-Yd45HEBHwAgEtKj9OOl0FCVdTAcHLvALa3mC4gmS--t6H03GmkuXo-qIlOPefexIEUwXAqGQRhbQ&_hsmi=85113543

FAQs:

Please find answers to some FAQs below:

How should I record my time if I am working remotely?

Employees working remotely should record time in ADP in the same manner as working in the regular workplace. Please account for work and non-work hours appropriately and approve timecards at the end of the pay period. If some work time is nonproductive but salary is being maintained, then employees and supervisors should agree on entering in what would normally be the employee's scheduled work times.

Will I still receive compensation and benefits if a clinical trial or other research project is suspended?

At this time, employees will continue to receive compensation and benefits for their research work that can be conducted remotely, following the March 17 message regarding suspension of clinical trials and the March 10 and March 18 directives to work from home whenever possible. PAVIR recommends using this time to analyze data, work on papers, and conduct other aspects of research that can be completed remotely. Please work with your supervisor to determine work agendas and effective communication during this time.

If my research project needs to be suspended, do I need to notify the sponsor?

Please contact PAVIR Contract and Grants at grants@pavir.org to discuss sponsor notification requirements.

Are VAPAHCS research committees (R&D, IRB, IACUC, etc.) still meeting and reviewing research projects?

Yes.

Can I use vacation time, and can I use sick leave even if I am not sick?

Yes, employees who cannot work remotely (whether due to work status or health status) may use vacation and, in some cases sick leave. Staff are encouraged to use vacation leave when they cannot work. For PIs who don't have the resources to continue to pay for standard work schedules, we encourage PIs and staff to talk and agree on the best approach. The options are vacation time and furloughs (which can be for some or all work hours) or leaves of absence if eligible. Use of sick time is not a viable option with limited PI funding because sick time is charged to funding sources in the same way that salary is charged (while vacation pay has been funded as it accrued.)

What should I do if I cannot work my full or typical work schedule due to required care of dependents?

Please reach out to your supervisor to discuss work flexibility and schedules. PAVIR is relaxing its flexible work guidelines during COVID-19 prevention to allow remote work while simultaneously caring for dependent family members. We are understanding of reasonable schedule accommodations to assist with work and family care. Plans should be discussed and approved by your supervisor.

Am I eligible for Family and Medical Leave (FLMA) if I become ill with COVID-19 or need to care for an ill

family member with COVID-19?

If you have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours within the last 12 months and have been employed for a year, you will be eligible for FMLA leave, as usual. Please reach out to your supervisor and if appropriate ask your supervisor to contact PAVIR HR (HR@pavir.org) to determine your eligibility. PAVIR will assist with FMLA logistics so your health may remain your top priority.

Am I eligible for Short Term Disability (STD) and State Disability Insurance (SDI) for an extended absence due to COVID-19?

You may be eligible for STD and SDI if you become ill with COVID-19. If you are unable to work and need an extended leave of absence, our STD provider is accepting claims to be reviewed and considered on a case by case basis. PAVIR HR can work with you to understand the documentation required for STD and SDI claim. Please ask your supervisor to contact HR@pavir.org with any questions on this process.

Regarding the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act:"

What paid leave benefits are offered?

· Up to two (2) weeks of paid sick leave if you have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19 or if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis. Documentation from a medical professional is required.

· Up to two (2) weeks of paid sick leave if you are caring for a qualified family member impacted by the above with a medical professional's note.

· Up to twelve (12) weeks of paid sick leave if you're caring for a child under the age of 18 while their school or childcare service is closed because of the public health emergency.

How much compensation is provided with this benefit?

The maximum amount you can earn each day for the above-stipulated maximum number of days is as follows:

· If you are sick or seeking a confirmed diagnosis: regular pay rate with a maximum of $511 per day

· If you are caring for a qualified family member: requires 10 day waiting period; 2/3 of pay rate with a maximum of $200 per day

· If you are caring for a child whose school is closed: requires 10 day waiting period; 2/3 of pay rate with a maximum of $200 per day, capped at $10,000 for the year

How long do I have to be employed for to qualify?

Individuals employed by PAVIR for at least 30 days before the first day of leave would qualify for paid leave.

Does this include part-time workers too?

Yes, this relief package and paid leave includes part-time workers. Employees who work a part-time schedule are entitled to be paid based on the average number of hours the employee worked for the six months prior to taking emergency leave. The average number of hours of worked would be granted for a two-week period.

How long will this benefit be available?

Currently, these paid sick leave benefits are temporary and last through December 31, 2020.