

Choosing Wisely in the Face of COVID-19 for Employers

April 9, 2020



Presenters



Scott Conard, MD
Chief Medical Director
National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions

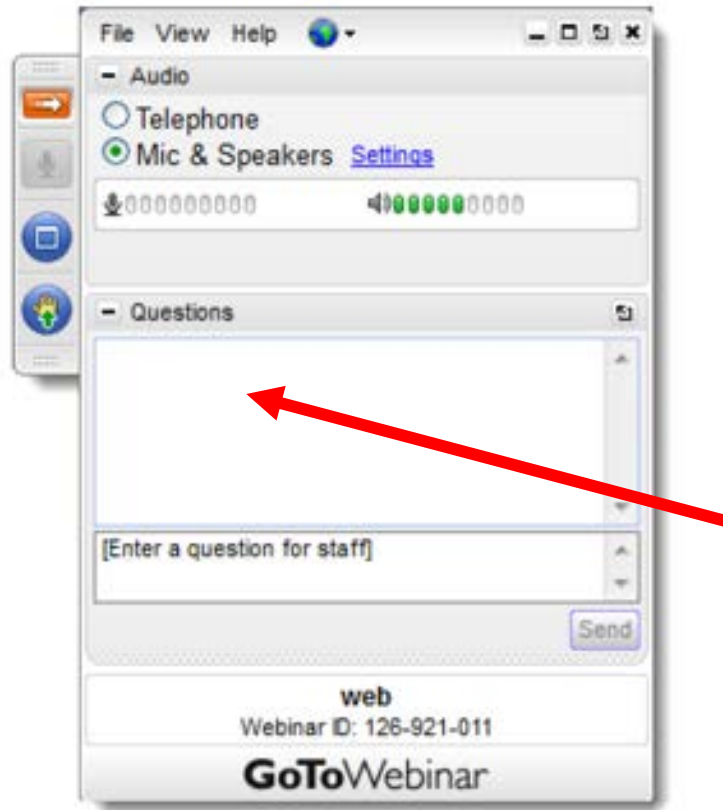


Stan Schwartz MD FACP
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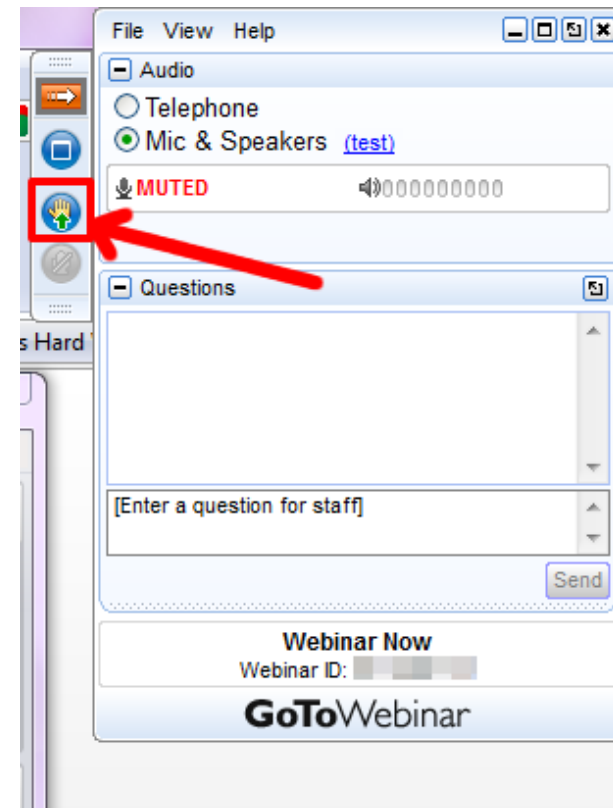
Medical Director Advisory Council Members

- Faiyaz Bhojani, MD
- Jeffery Burtaine, MD
- Scott Conard, MD
- Mark Cunningham-Hill, MD
- Ray Fabius, MD
- Diana Han, MD
- Ned Kusti, MD
- Justin Moore, MD
- Suresh Mukherji, MD
- Stan Schwartz, MD
- Bruce Sherman, MD
- Christa-Marie Singleton, MD

Questions



Raise your hand

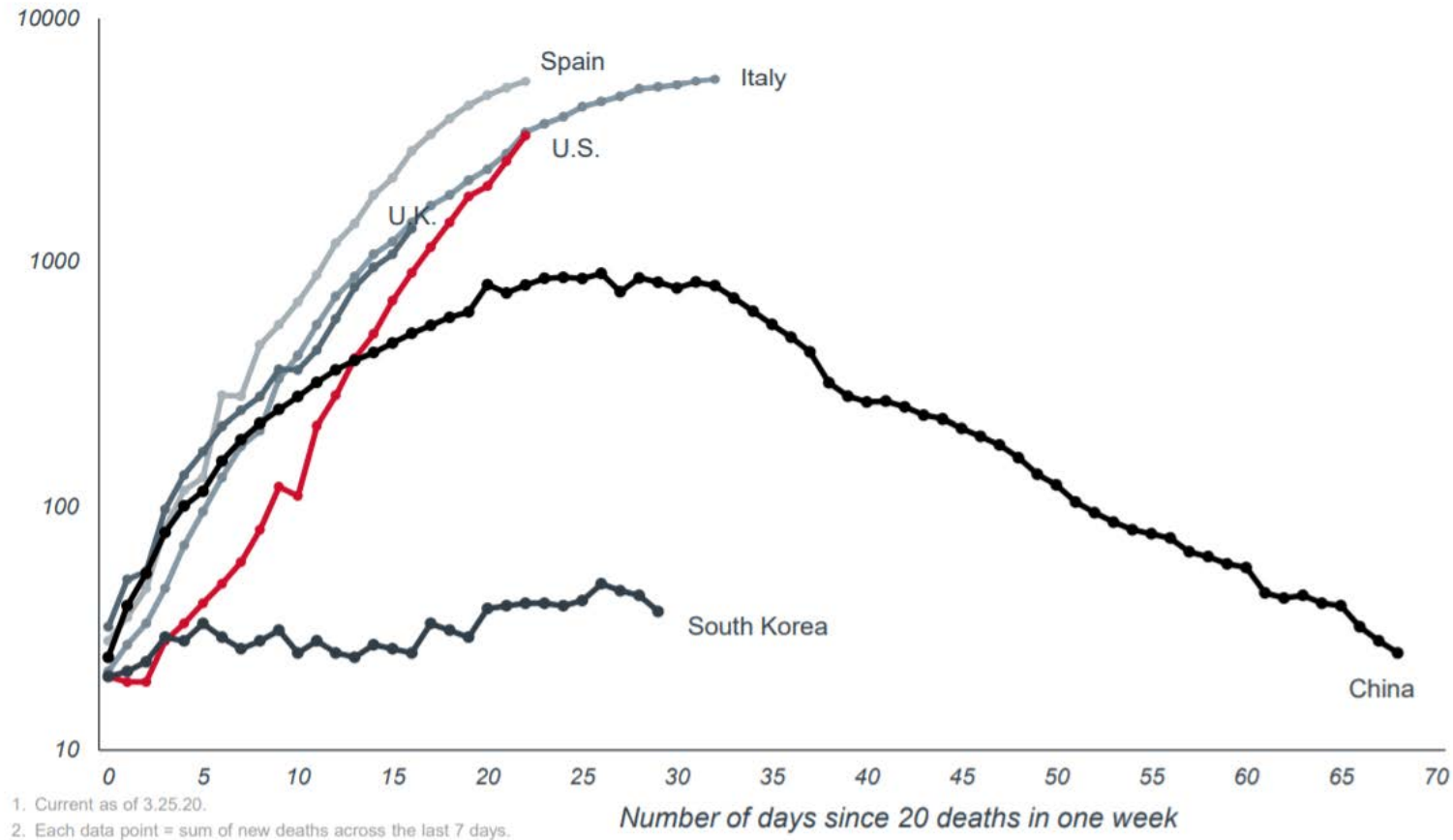


Symptoms and Signs of COVID-19

	COVID-19	Cold	Flu	Allergies
Fever	Common	Rare	Common	No
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common	Rare
Cough	Common (Dry)	Mild	Common (dry)	Occasional
Sneezing	No	Common	No	Common
Aches & Pains	Sometimes	Common	Common	Rare
Runny or Stuffy Nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	Occasional
Diarrhea	Rare	No	Sometimes for Kids	No
Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common	Rare
Shortness of Breath	Sometimes	No	No	Rare

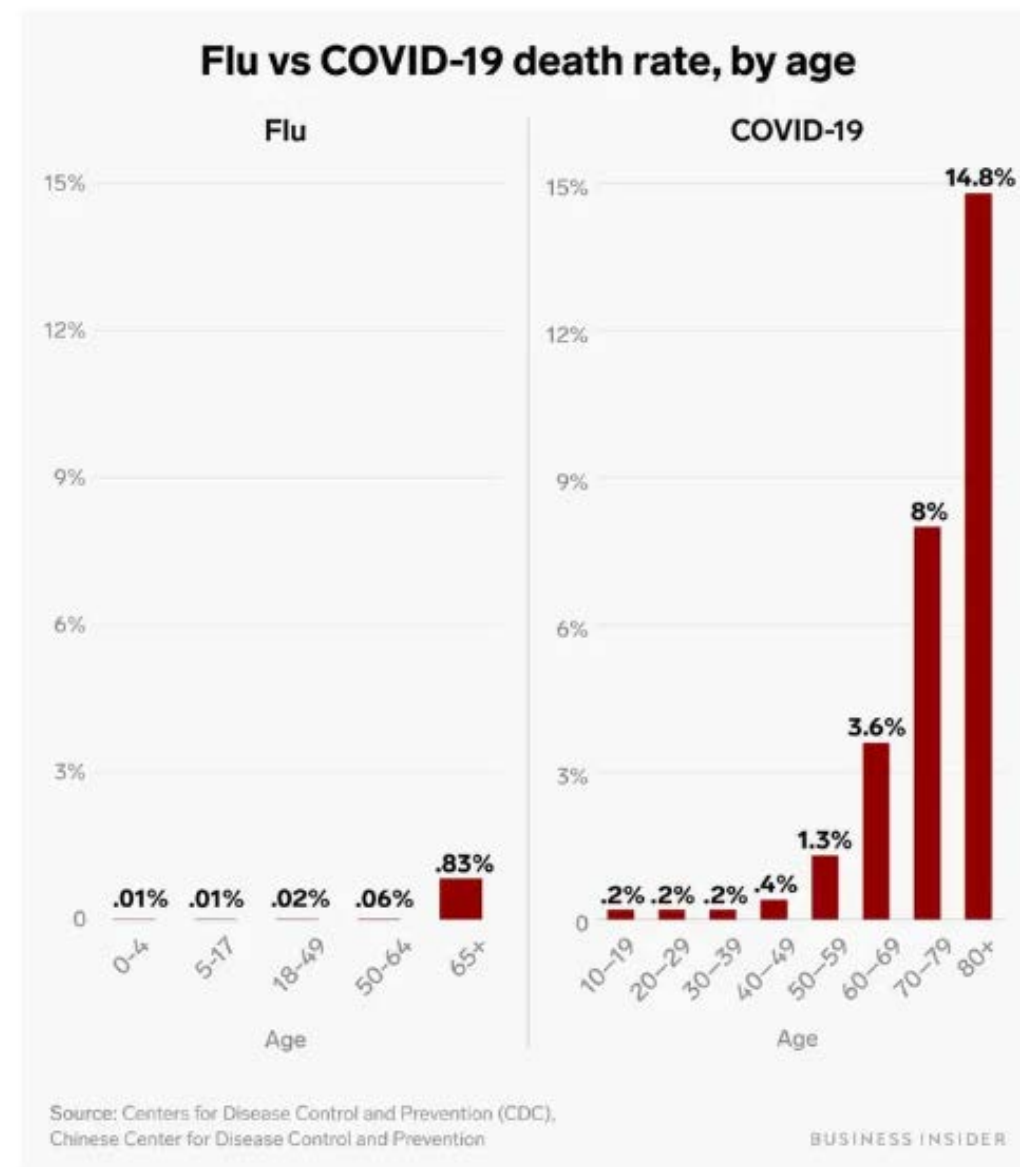
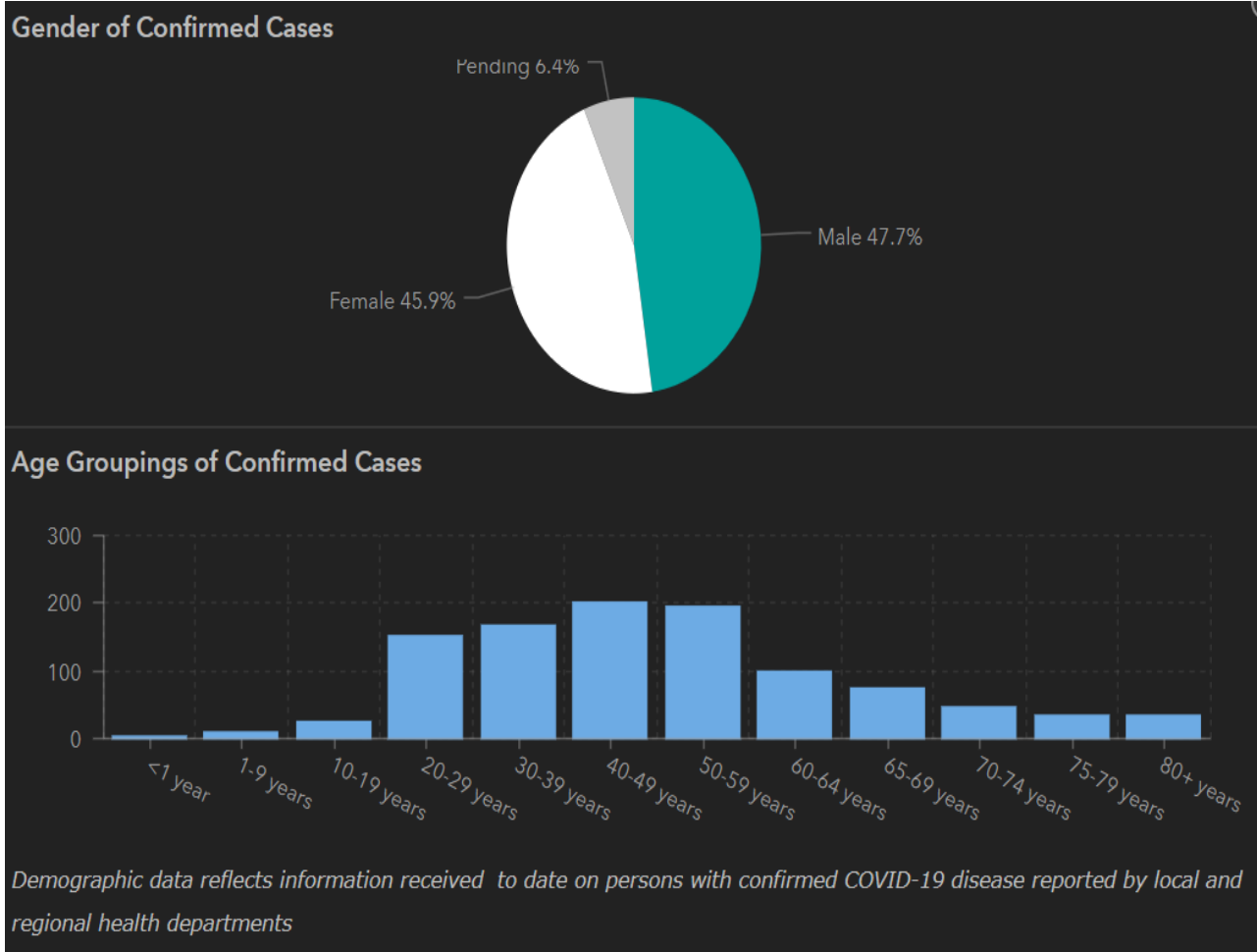
Understanding Spread





Following the course of COVID-19 Internationally

Country, Other	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Recovered	Active Cases	Serious, Critical	Tot Cases/ 1M pop	Deaths/ 1M pop	Total Tests	Tests/ 1M pop
World	1,346,004	+73,142	74,654	+5,229	278,445	992,905	47,513	173	9.6		
USA	367,004	+30,331	10,871	+1,255	19,671	336,462	8,879	1,109	33	1,914,540	5,784
Spain	136,675	+5,029	13,341	+700	40,437	82,897	6,931	2,923	285	355,000	7,593
Italy	132,547	+3,599	16,523	+636	22,837	93,187	3,898	2,192	273	721,732	11,937
Germany	103,375	+3,252	1,810	+226	28,700	72,865	4,895	1,234	22	918,460	10,962
France	98,010	+5,171	8,911	+833	17,250	71,849	7,072	1,502	137	224,254	3,436
China	81,708	+39	3,331	+2	77,078	1,299	265	57	2		
Iran	60,500	+2,274	3,739	+136	24,236	32,525	4,083	720	45	186,000	2,214
UK	51,608	+3,802	5,373	+439	135	46,100	1,559	760	79	252,958	3,726
Turkey	30,217	+3,148	649	+75	1,326	28,242	1,415	358	8	202,845	2,405
Switzerland	21,657	+557	765	+50	8,056	12,836	391	2,502	88	162,500	18,776
Belgium	20,814	+1,123	1,632	+185	3,986	15,196	1,257	1,796	141	70,000	6,040
Netherlands	18,803	+952	1,867	+101	250	16,686	1,409	1,097	109	86,589	5,053
Canada	16,667	+1,155	323	+43	3,616	12,728	426	442	9	330,901	8,767

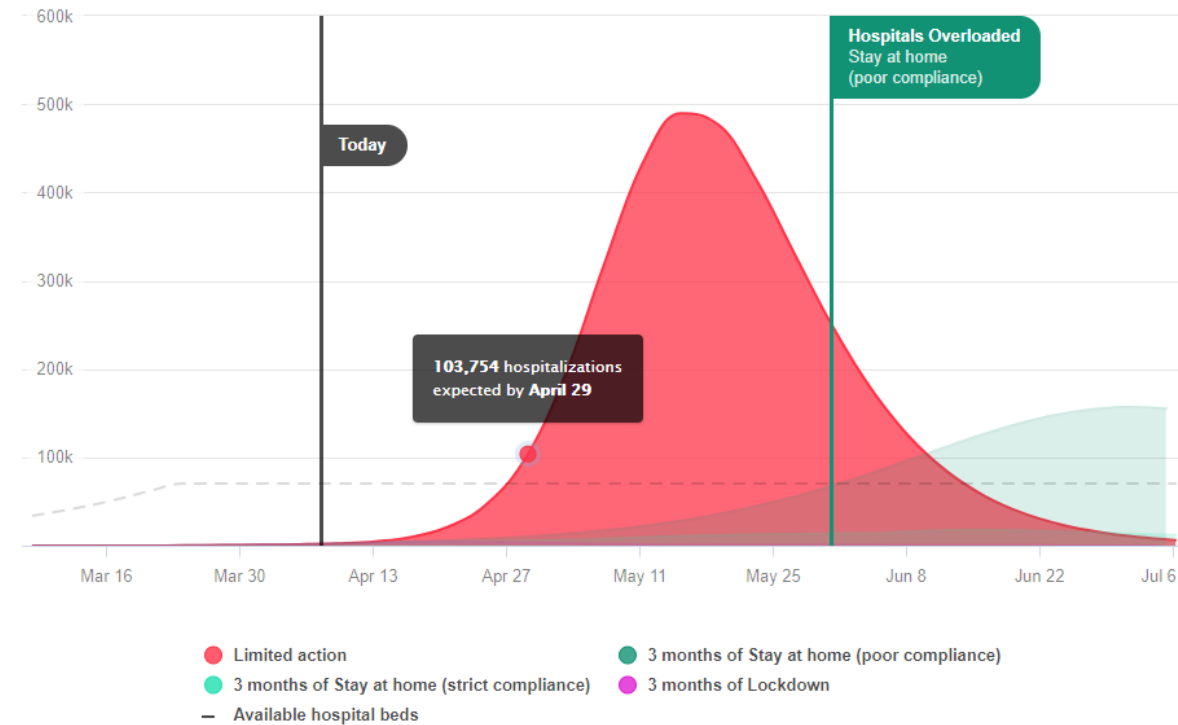


Predicted Outcomes after 3 Months

Scenario	Estimated Cumulative Infected	Estimated Date Hospitals Overloaded	Estimated Deaths
Limited action	>70%	Sun Apr 26 2020	305,000
3 Months of Stay at home (poor compliance)*	49%	Sun May 31 2020	95,000
3 Months of Stay at home (strict compliance)*	8%	never	19,000
3 Months of Lockdown**	1%	never	3,000

* A second spike in disease may occur after social distancing is stopped. Interventions are important because they buy time to create surge capacity in hospitals and develop therapeutic drugs that may have potential to lower hospitalization and fatality rates from COVID. [See full scenario definitions here.](#)

Projected hospitalizations Texas



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Coronavirus

You've seen your doctor because of **cough**, 100° **fever** and general aches. You have **nausea** and no appetite. You have no shortness of breath. You got a COVID-19 nasal swab on a parking lot line which was **positive**.



Your doctor says treatment may be effective

Both she and you have read reports about the combination of **hydroxychloroquine** and **azithromycin**.

Both are generic, not terribly expensive. (The brand names are Plaquenil and Zithromax.)

Zithromax is used for certain bacterial respiratory infections. Plaquenil is used for malaria, certain other uncommon infections and for autoimmune diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.



Your doctor says she can send a prescription to your pharmacy.

What do you say?

Shared Decision-making

Shared decision-making is a model of **patient-centered care** that enables and encourages people to play a role in the medical decisions that affect their health. It operates under **two premises**:

- First, consumers armed with **good information*** can and will participate in the medical decision-making process by **asking informed questions** and expressing **personal values and opinions** about their conditions and treatment options.
- Second, clinicians will respect **patients' goals** and preferences and use them to guide recommendations and treatments.

*AKA evidence-based medicine



Old and New

Old

“I’m sending out a prescription for two meds.
Your pharmacist will give you instructions.”

Me: “OK, thanks.”

New

I’m sending out a prescription.”

Me: “Before you do that, I have a couple of
questions.”



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5 QUESTIONS to Ask Your Doctor Before You Get Any Test, Treatment, or Procedure

- 1 Do I really need this test or procedure?** Medical tests help you and your doctor or other health provider decide how to treat a problem. And medical procedures help to actually treat it.
- 2 What are the risks?** Will there be side effects? What are the chances of getting results that aren't accurate? Could that lead to more testing or another procedure?
- 3 Are there simpler, safer options?** Sometimes all you need to do is make lifestyle changes, such as eating healthier food or exercising more.
- 4 What happens if I don't do anything?** Ask if your condition might get worse — or better — if you don't have the test or procedure right away.
- 5 How much does it cost?** Ask if there are less-expensive tests, treatments or procedures, what your insurance may cover, and about generic drugs instead of brand-name drugs.

Do I really need this test or procedure (or treatment)?

“Well, at your age of 30 and your overall health, your chances of serious illness requiring hospitalization is not high.”

“Most young people can recover at home.”

What are the risks?

“We only have scant evidence that these medications are effective based on extremely limited studies. You could be taking meds of uncertain benefit for something that’s likely to improve on its own.”

“Hydroxychloroquine can cause eye, heart, skin and blood side effects that are unlikely for a short treatment. However, people with a certain heart problem (one they may not be aware of) can have a major heart rhythm problem*. It also interacts with one of your current medications.”

“Zithromax can cause diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. It can also affect the heart rhythm like hydroxychloroquine.”

* *“prolonged QTc interval” that may lead to torsades de pointes*

Are there simpler, safer options?

“Well, the simplest option is to stay home, use Tylenol if it helps you feel better and keep up your intake of liquids.”

What happens if I don't do anything?

“Most likely you will get better. There’s a small chance you may get pneumonia and require hospitalization.

“You can let me know if you get any shortness of breath or believe you are getting worse. That may be a more appropriate time to consider unproven but possibly helpful treatment.”

How much does it cost?

If we treat you, the treatment would probably be around \$20-30 in total. The drugs may not be immediately available. Your pharmacist would know.

More...

choosingwisely.org



An initiative of the ABIM Foundation

Questions & Answers



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WellOK, The Northeastern Oklahoma Business
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ACTION BRIEF

Employer Strategies that Drive Value



COVID-19

THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING

ACTION STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS:

1. Promote shared decision-making and patient-centered care, especially in relation to COVID-19 testing and treatment.
2. Promote use of the *Choosing Wisely* "5 Questions to Ask your Doctor..."
3. Understand and communicate about the spread of coronavirus.



"Patients have a big role to play in turning the average healthcare experience into patient-centered care."

— Stan Schwartz, MD, FACP
Medical Director, The Northeastern Oklahoma Business Coalition on Health

Easing Stress on Patients, Providers and the Healthcare System

Helping employees make informed decisions about their choices and responsibilities is a growing trend that is especially important in light of COVID-19. Having a tool to guide shared decision-making conversations enables employees to think through their questions and concerns in advance of an office or e-visit so conversations with healthcare providers are efficient and effective.

1. Promote shared decision-making and patient-centered care.

Shared decision-making is a model of patient-centered care that enables people to play a role in the medical decisions that affect their health. It operates under two premises.

First, patients armed with evidence-based care knowledge feel empowered to participate in care decisions.

Second, clinicians use patient preferences to guide recommendations.

Why Is Shared Decision-Making More Important Than Ever During Covid-19?

- Good information helps people make informed care decisions and manage their anxiety.
- The impact of COVID-19 varies greatly based on patient age, risk factors, and personal environment.



2. Encourage use of the *Choosing Wisely* "Five Questions to Ask your Doctor..."

- Prudent use of care and resources is essential with a system under extreme stress.
- There is no known immunization or treatment available.
- Possible treatments featured in the media are based on poor-quality studies.
- Everyone must take action to limit virus spread.

Encouraging employees to use the "5 questions" developed by ABIM Foundation healthcare providers equips them to have meaningful conversations about evidence-based standards of care and share decision-making responsibilities.

"The key is to clearly define and communicate employee guidelines for stopping workplace spread of the virus."

— Scott Conrad, MD
Founder of Converging Health

Choosing Wisely focuses on care that is:

- Supported by evidence
- Not duplicative of other tests or procedures
- Most effective and least risky
- Truly necessary
- Informed by patient needs and preferences

Printable wallet cards featuring the "5 Questions" are available at choosingwisely.org, along with a large library of provider- and patient-friendly materials on dozens on healthcare topics.

3. Communicate about the spread of COVID-19.

The practical aspects of how organizations can take action are complex. The graphic below shows how the virus is spread. A detailed explanation is available by clicking on the first link under "Employer Resources."

CHOOSING WISELY COVID-19: Bringing the "5 Questions" to Life

Based on your symptoms, the doctor ordered a COVID-19 nasal swab test. The test was positive. You've heard that hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin might help you get better faster. *Choosing Wisely* can inform your decision.

1. Are these medications likely to help me? Evidence that these medications work is based on very small, low-quality studies. Because you are in good health and age 30, your chance of serious illness requiring hospitalization is very low.
2. What are the risks? These drugs do not often cause serious side effects when given for a short time but can interact with one of your current medications.

3. What are simpler, safer options? The best option is to stay home, rest, push fluids, and use acetaminophen for fever or body aches. If symptoms worsen and you begin to have trouble breathing, call our urgent care line right away.

4. What happens if I do nothing? It's highly likely you'll get better with home care.

5. How much do the drugs cost? The cost is about \$20-\$30. Even though they are affordable and unlikely to cause harm, I do not recommend them for you at this time.

"Tools like the '5 Questions' equip employees to take part in their care. When coupled with promoting access to virtual care options, stress on employers, employees and the healthcare system is lessened."

— Michael Thompson
National Alliance President & CEO

RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS:

- National Alliance COVID-19 resource page
- choosingwisely.org
- covidactnow.org
- Local public health departments

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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UNDERSTANDING THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19



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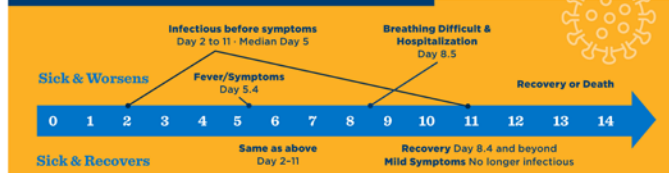
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APRIL 2020

Understanding the Spread of the COVID-19



As corporations are beginning to deal with the CORONAVIRUS pandemic the practical aspects of how to take action are becoming more challenging. To appreciate the implications of this let's look at an example if one of your employees is found to be ill with COVID-19.

How long does it take once infected for symptoms to appear (the incubation period)? Our current understanding is that COVID-19 is spread from person to person and so it is important to notify others should a case occur in a work environment. A recently published study confirms fewer than 2.5% developed symptoms within 2.2 days. The estimated time from being exposed to the development of symptoms is a median of 5.1 days. Estimated time until development of a fever was 5.7 days. Of those who are latest to develop symptoms 97.5% of those infected had symptoms appear by 11.5 days.

When did the employee begin to shed virus (begin to infect others)? In a soon to be published study researchers found "very high levels of virus emitted from the

throat of patients from the earliest point in their illness — when people are generally still going about their daily routines." So in the first two days they may become infectious.

What do we do with the co-workers (and family members)? Thus, by the time COVID-19 was diagnosed, coworkers could have been exposed to active virus shedding to at several days of active shedding of the virus (depending on what day their symptoms started). This is a real problem when an employer is attempting to limit spread.

What now? In the best of all possible worlds all the employees at work will have used social distancing, the worktops and other shared spaces will have been cleaned regularly and thoroughly, and the workers had used hand washing extensively and retrained themselves not to touch their faces. One strategy, temperature checking, could occur prior to entering the premises, but a fever only occurs at 5.4 days, again allowing time to pass infecting others.

When can the employee return to work safely? In the same study mentioned above it is concluded: "The scientists could not grow viruses from throat swabs or sputum specimens after day 8 of illness from people who had mild infections." For those with moderate to severe symptoms the jury is still out on when they can return to work.

Final thoughts Managing the Coronavirus in the workplace is presenting significant challenges. Using Shared Decision Making to guide the conversation between corporations and their employees, and the employees and their providers provides the context for effective communication. The key is educating, encouraging, engaging and supporting employees' guidelines for social distancing, personal hygiene, sheltering in place and early identification of risk and/or symptoms.



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Driving Innovation, Health and Value

<https://www.nationalalliancehealth.org/www/resources-new/employer-resources-covid-19>

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TOTAL PERSON HEALTH
ACHIEVING VALUE 2020

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