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DATE: March 23, 2020

TO: Heads of State Agencies and Human Resources Directors

SUBJECT: COVID-19 – No. 11: Medical Certifications / Doctor’s Notes

This general circular provides continued guidance to frequently asked questions from state agencies in light of the continuing COVID-19 crisis.

Civil Service Rule 27.3 Required Sick Leave:

An appointing authority may place an employee on sick leave and require that he remove himself from the workplace when he has declined to utilize sick leave but presents for duty displaying symptoms associated with COVID-19 including fever, cough and/or shortness of breath. For this rule to apply, the symptoms must be observed by at least two individuals, one of whom must be in a supervisory position. The employee may be returned to duty at the appointing authority’s discretion; however, he shall be returned to duty upon presentation of a certification from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner who, after personally examining the employee, certifies that he is capable of performing the essential functions of his position without posing a risk of harm to himself or others. If the employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, the provisions of Rule 27.2(a)3 apply; otherwise, regular sick leave rules under Chapter 11 shall apply.

Appointing Authorities are encouraged to use their best judgement and provide flexibility during this time regarding medical certifications and doctor’s notes. Health care provider offices and medical facilities are extremely busy during this time and may not be able to provide such documentation in a timely manner. Rule 27.3 allows the Appointing Authority the discretion to return the employee to work at any time or he shall return the employee to work when the employee provides a medical certification.

In order to assist Appointing Authorities in determining when the employee is able to return to work safely without a medical certification, the Louisiana Department of Health has provided guidance for any employee with suspect or confirmed COVID-19. Please use the following updated symptom-based strategy to return to normal activity following a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Continue isolation until:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

If there are any questions about the information in this General Circular, please contact your Agency Relationship Manager.

Please continue to monitor our website and social media platforms for updates and/or changes to the situation.

Sincerely,

s/Byron P. Decoteau, Jr.
State Civil Service Director