



April 7, 2020

To: All Employees

From: Pandemic Working Group

**Re: COVID-19 – Unique Viral Attributes/White House Briefing/South Korean Measures**

How COVID-19 is Different. Over the passage of time, experts have come to understand more about this virus. We know, for example, that it is far less contagious than measles, but still contagious even by people who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. We also know that the virus can affect people in radically different ways. It has shown itself to be more severe in the elderly and those with underlying conditions. And, according to Johns Hopkins immunologist Andrew Pekosz, unlike other influenza strains, to our knowledge, there is no one in the population who is immune. Interestingly, Prof. Pekosz goes on to observe that researchers are trying to understand why COVID is “able to cause many more cases of mild disease compared to other viruses.” With no immunity, transmission without symptoms and mild presentation in many cases, this virus, which can be severe, is difficult to contain without social measures such as those recommended by CDC and most of the states.

White House Notes. Last night, Dr. Anthony Fauci gave further shape to the prospect of getting “back to normal,” noting that “we are at a time of “very intense mitigation” and that “over a period of time, we will go back gradually to the point where we can function as a society.” On a note of encouragement, he relayed the report of New York’s Governor Mario Cuomo that the number of hospitalizations, admissions to ICU and intubations had leveled off over the past three days in that state. Dr. Deborah Birx then encouraged all of us to do everything possible to contain the pandemic in our daily lives, including commonsense measures such as sending one person to the store in lieu of the entire family.

South Korea. By adopting a host of social measures early, South Korea has managed to limit the pandemic to about 10,000 cases in a country of over 51 million. After banning large gatherings, closing schools and public places, cancelling sporting events, imposing travel restrictions and sensitizing the populace to social distancing, use of masks and self-quarantine, the government set up a national mobile phone alert system that warns residents when a fresh case is detected, including links as to that person’s social trail. They then developed two mobile phone applications, one for visitors from high-risk areas (which requires self-monitoring to be reported daily) and the other that warns public officials whenever a person in quarantine leaves the isolation zone. In light of privacy considerations and lesser degrees of interconnectedness, this level of intervention is not possible in all countries. However, the example tends to support the assumptions discussed in yesterday’s advisory on how to control a pandemic in the absence of a vaccine.

**Bottom Line:** We encourage you to stay healthy, to keep the workplace safe and to give encouragement to those who are doing the same.

**If you have questions on any of these matters, please contact either Kelly Willmott ([kellyw@amvac.com](mailto:kellyw@amvac.com)) or Tim Donnelly ([timd@amvac.com](mailto:timd@amvac.com)).**