



To: Via Employees
From: Lisa Walkiewicz, President & CEO
Date: March 18, 2020
Re: Update: Closure Dates/Compensation & Benefits During Closure

Via is committed to our employees and participants and we continue to address challenges presented by COVID-19. First and foremost, we want to maintain a safe workplace and encourage practices protecting the health of our community. We will continue to provide important information to employees while ensuring that Via remains organizationally operational, so we are able to provide services after the COVID-19 crisis ends.

Via will be closed through Friday, March 27, 2020. This includes Via programs and services, Via Thrift Stores (through March 28), Lehigh Children's Academy and Early Intervention services. We receive daily updates from the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and Office of Child Development and Learning (OCDEL) about how to support participants. Some Via services have been authorized to operate remotely, while some levels of direct support have been authorized in specific cases. Additionally, we just received notice from OCDEL that Lehigh Children's Academy is able to provide childcare to essential service personal only such as first responders and health care workers.

We will continue to provide updates to employees as more information become available. We will reevaluate our status before Friday, March 27 and update all employees at that time.

Communication

- Updates will be posted on WFMZ.com, Facebook, Paylocity and through email.
- Download the Paylocity app on your mobile device so you can receive communications on your device.

PLB

Eligible employees can use their Paid Leave Bank (PLB) for this closure. If they choose, employees can retain up to 5 PLB days for when operations resume. Employees who do not have sufficient PLB and **wish to exhaust their balance** can borrow up to 5 days of PLB if you have at least one year of service with Via. Employees who have been with Via for less than one year can borrow up to 3 days of PLB (this includes employees within their first 90 days of employment). Future PLB accrual will be used to pay back the borrowed time when operations resume. **Example shown below:**

- *PLB Balance for a full-time employee, with more than 1 year of service, who wants to exhaust their 20-hour PLB balance.*
- *Via is closed for two weeks or 80 hours.*
- *Employee uses 20 PLB hours and borrows 40 PLB hours.*
- *Employee is paid for 60 hours; their PLB balance is negative 40 hours.*
- *Once operations resume, employee begins to accrue PLB. The time accrued is used to pay back the borrowed time.*

Timesheets for Pay Period March 8 to March 21

Please submit your timesheet **no later than Friday, March 20**. Please list any PLB time you have taken this week on your timesheet. If you use Paylocity to request time off/PLB time please continue to do so. **The next pay will be issued on March 27.**



Supervisors: please assist your staff with submitting timesheets if they do not have access to email. In addition, please complete the PLB request spreadsheet that you received by email today. Human Resources needs this information to properly complete Unemployment Claim Forms.

Unemployment Compensation (UC)

Per the PA Office of Unemployment Compensation (UC), the Waiting Week for UC Benefits is suspended. Previously, claimants were not eligible for benefits during their first week of unemployment. This has been suspended; eligible claimants may receive benefits for the first week they are unemployed.

We encourage our employees affected by the closure to file for unemployment compensation **as soon as possible** as payments may take two to four weeks to process. Employees who have a PLB balance must use all their PLB time unless they choose to reserve up to 5 days for when operations resume. **You do not need to wait until your PLB is used to file for unemployment. Employees who are working partial hours are also able to file for unemployment.** Please visit <https://www.uc.pa.gov> to learn more about unemployment compensation and apply for benefits.

Here are some tips for completing an unemployment claim:

- When you complete your initial claim, you **DO NOT** need the UC account #. Leave the field blank.
- If you do not know your hire date, give your best guess or login to Paylocity to find your hire date. Human Resources will correct hire dates as needed when completing the employer portion of the claim.
- After filing your initial application for UC benefits, you will receive a Claims Confirmation letter in the mail. This letter will provide you with your 4-digit PIN# necessary to file your biweekly claim. This letter will also provide the date you will file your first biweekly claim, which is generally the second Sunday after completing your initial application for benefits.
- When you file a biweekly claim, you will be filing for two weeks at a time. For UC purposes, a week is a calendar week that begins Sunday and ends Saturday. Although you will file for two weeks at one time, you will certify your eligibility for each week separately. **NOTE: THE DEPARTMENT CANNOT PAY YOU FOR WEEKS UNLESS A TIMELY BIWEEKLY CLAIM HAS BEEN FILED.**
- The best way to file your biweekly claim is online from 6am to 11pm Sunday, and 6am to 9pm Monday through Friday at <https://www.uc.pa.gov>
- You also can file by phone by using the PA Teleclaims (PAT) system. Call 888-255-4728 (TTY services for the deaf and hard of hearing: 888-334-4046), from 6am to 11pm Sunday, and 6am to 9pm Monday through Friday.

Short-Term Disability

Employees who are full-time and have been employed with Via for one year can apply for short-term disability under Via's short-term disability policy provided by Sun Life if they themselves have contracted the virus and are



unable to work. Employees who are eligible and laid off (not working) will be eligible for up to one month post lay off.

The waiting period under this policy is seven days. After the seven day waiting period eligible employees will receive 60% of their weekly pay for up to 90 days. Sun Life will promptly pay all valid claims in which an eligible member has a qualifying and documented medical event, including an event related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

If you need to file a claim and are covered under this policy, please contact Kristen Del Valle K.Delvalle@ViaNet.org to obtain the claim form. You will need to complete the employee section of the form and your doctor will need to complete the physician section.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Via employees can utilize our Employee Assistance Program to gain support, resources and information during this difficult time. EAP provides counseling services, financial resources and specific crisis support. Support services are available at www.guidanceresources.com/crisis or by calling the toll free resources line at **888-828-3240**. There is a COVID-19/Coronavirus toolkit that can be accessed by clicking on the link below. This was done to consolidate resources into one live link for ease of access. Also, the links below are provided for ComPsych's webinars relating to the Coronavirus.

Coronavirus U.S. Digital Toolkit: <https://pages.e2ma.net/pages/1807892/20932>

Coping With Uncertainty About The Coronavirus Course:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/361653968327770625>

Health Insurance

At this time, coverage under Via's health plan will remain in effect through this closing event.

Federal Relief in Legislation

Congress may pass legislation in the next few days called the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. The proposed act will:

- 14 days of paid sick leave, at two-thirds (or more) of their regular rate of pay, for government workers and employees of companies with fewer than 500 employees.
- Leave is available to workers who are sick, have to care for a sick family member or have a child whose school or childcare facility has closed due to the coronavirus.
- Expansion of the FMLA for employees of companies with fewer than 500 employees, requiring paid leave at the two-thirds rate after 14 days. A tax credit for employers that provide paid sick leave benefits required by the Act.
- Additional funding for state unemployment programs.

Please contact the human resources department with any questions or concerns.