



# The Pandemic and HR



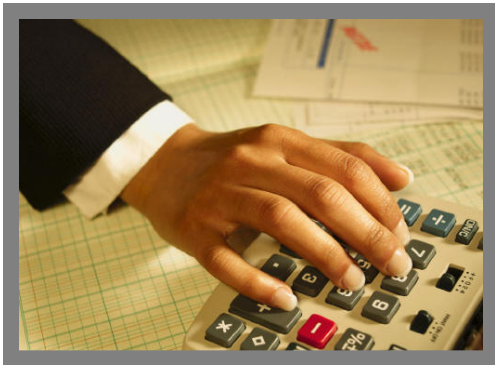
John Hedblom  
Arizona Federal  
Credit Union

# Primary HR Responsibilities

- Payroll/Compensation
- HRIS
- Benefits
- Legal Compliance
- Staffing/Recruiting
- Policies and Procedures
- Training and Development
- Employee Relations
- Labor Relations (if unions involved)



# Impact of Pandemic on Critical HR Functions: Payroll



- In-House?  
Need at least one back-up person who knows how to run the payroll. If internal IT is required, make sure they are prepared with a back-up
- Outsourced?  
What is your provider's plan for dealing with a Pandemic?
- If you have no ability to run payroll as normal, do you have a plan in place re paying employees?

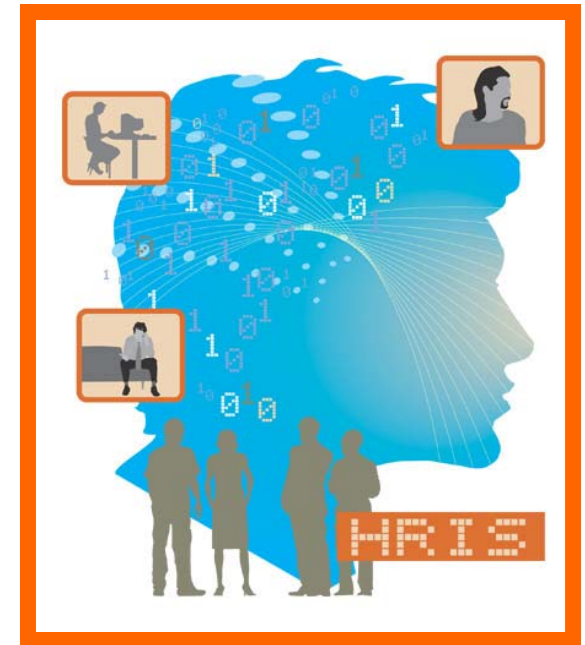
# Time and Attendance

- Time and Attendance – is it part of payroll or a separate system linked by HRIS?
  - If for some reason time and attendance is down, you should have a means to feed the data to payroll manually



# Impact of Pandemic on Critical HR Functions: HRIS

- To what extent do your HRIS systems drive payroll, benefits and other critical systems?
- Do you have IT back-up to maintain the HRIS system if your HR resource is not available?
- If outsourced, do your HRIS vendors have a Pandemic plan and have they shared it with you?



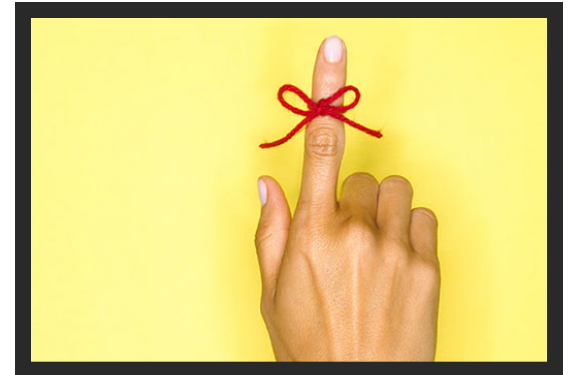
# Impact of Pandemic on Critical HR Functions: Benefits



- If the pandemic reaches a significant level:
  - Medical Coverage
  - Sick Leave
  - PTO
  - Short Term Disability
  - Will all be important players

# Benefit Reminders....

- Do all of your employees know...
  - How to use their medical benefits?
    - (e.g., network v. out of network, deductibles, co-pays, etc.)
  - How to report absences under sick leave or PTO?
  - How to access Short Term Disability (STD) benefits if you have them?



# Communication

- Employee communication regarding Pandemic:
  - prevent the spread
  - explain procedures/plans
  - contact employees when not in workplace
  - EAP assistance reminders
- Communicate immediately with employees about benefits, so that they have the answers before questions arise
- Contact your Benefits TPA to see if they will spring for Flu Shots!



# Possible Additional Pandemic Responsibilities for HR

- Provision of disease prevention supplies for employees in the workplace (tissues, hand cleansers, no-touch trash cans, disinfectants)
- Creation of employee support networks for those sick employees in need
- Staffing models for reduced workforce situations
- Coordinate with operating departments regarding work-from-home solutions



# Attendance Policies

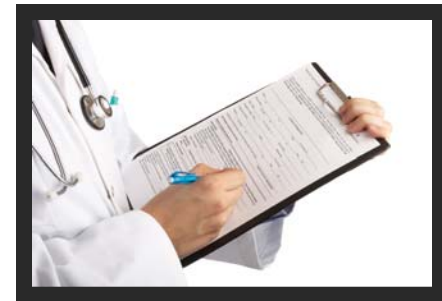
“80 % of success is just showing up.”

- Do your attendance policies already provide for flexibility?
- Paid Time Off (PTO) policies generally combine vacation and sick into one benefit
- Do you also have a reserve sick bank (RSB)?
  - Can it be used by employee for family member's illness?
  - Can it be used if parent needs to care for a child staying home from a closed school?
- If not, consider expanding your policy to include this during Pandemic, as long as employee provides documentation



# Attendance Policies

- Do you track and discipline for unexcused absences?
  - Have you created exceptions for Pandemic? e.g., if a school is closed and parent is required to stay home, will this be unexcused absence?
- Do you have a policy addressing employee “fitness for duty” if an employee is obviously exhibiting flu-like symptoms?
- Can you send the employee home in this situation, even if the employee has no paid leave time left?
- Consider reminding employees regarding their reporting obligations for absences. Knowing in advance who will be there is important when staffing is already reduced



# Employment Law Considerations: Family Medical Leave



- Depending on the severity of illness, an employee could qualify for Family Medical Leave -- “serious health condition”
- CDC has urged employers not to require that an employee returning from influenza provide a physician’s release to return to work
- CDC request conflicts with FML language requiring a uniform policy regarding employee medical releases for return to work, i.e., if you give up the right for a release in this circumstance, you have arguably given it up in all others
- Request might also conflict with an employer’s duty to provide a safe work place

# Employment Law Considerations: OSHA and HIPPA

## ■ OSHA

- Protects employees from retaliation if they refuse to work because of good-faith concerns about workplace safety

## ■ HIPPA

- Employer cannot discuss or release names of sick employees



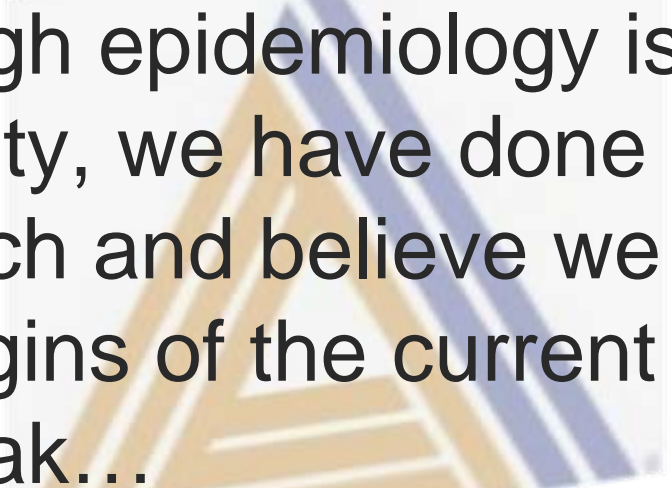
# Employment Law Considerations: ADA and Defamation



- ADA may limit employer's:
  - Right to ask employees about medical conditions or
  - Ability to require a medical exam
- Defamation: Falsely accusing employee of illness could be defamatory
  - Be careful to adhere to confidentiality standards when discussing illness with employee

# How Novel H1N1 Influenza Started

Although epidemiology is not an HR specialty, we have done extensive research and believe we understand the origins of the current influenza outbreak...



# How Swine Flu Started

