CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) MESSAGING GUIDE

The 2019 coronavirus – also known as COVID-19 – has introduced many new terms to our vocabulary; from “social distancing” to “community transmission.” What exactly do these words mean? What’s the difference between an “outbreak,” an “epidemic,” and a “pandemic,” and what does “flattening the curve” mean? Here is a brief guide that offers ways to talk about how our work is continuing during this time, a few tips and a glossary of terms.

Instead of:
- The crisis
- The virus
- The disease
- The sickness
- This disaster
- Our offices are closed
- We are closed
- We’re not open
- Working from home

Try using:
- Unprecedented times
- The COVID-19 pandemic
- This rapidly changing situation
- Difficult/challenging time
- During COVID-19
- This time in our history
- Many of our services continue to be available, either remotely or with new safety practices.
- While implementing physical distancing, we remain committed to moving our work forward and serving our communities.
- Many of our employees are carrying out their work remotely, offering vital services you rely on.

Explaining our Response

"We are committed to ensuring the health and well-being of our clients, employees, and community. As recommended by state and local health officials, we have taken a number of necessary measures since mid-March to safeguard clients and employees while continuing operations. Many Penquis services continue to be available, either remotely or with new safety practices."

Penquis Services

Penquis is currently providing many services deemed “essential” by state officials. These in-person services have implemented new practices to protect everyone’s health and safety. Many other vital services are available by phone or online.

During normal business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, someone is also available to take your calls. You can find the latest updates to Penquis services on our website and our Facebook page. You can also message us on Facebook Messenger and someone will respond to you as soon as possible.

Penquis remains a resource for our community throughout this pandemic. Please reach out to us with your needs. Phone: (207) 973-3500, or via our website at www.penquis.org

Health and Safety Tips

During these difficult times it is important that you take care of yourself and loved ones. Obtaining accurate information from trusted sources, such as from the CDC’s Coronavirus page, is the first step in ensuring the health and safety of yourself and those around you.

Physical Distancing
Stay home as much as possible. Remain at least 6 feet away from others.

Hand Washing
Wash hands often. Wet hands with clean running water. Lather hands with soap. Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds. Rinse hands under clean running water. Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Be Kind to Yourself and Others

Stay Connected
Call, text, email, or video chat loved ones. Reach out for support. Know that we’re in this together.

Get Proper Rest and Proper Nutrition
Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day. Maintain a healthy, balanced diet.
**Asymptomatic:** Presenting no symptoms of disease. In the case of COVID-19, this means absence of fever, dry cough, sore throat, shortness of breath and body aches, among other less common symptoms. Notably, it is recommended that individuals do not get tested unless they exhibit symptoms because of the risk of false negatives. In other words, most tests will not be accurate unless symptoms are present.

**Community transmission:** The spread of a contagious disease in a geographic area in which there is no knowledge of how someone contracted the disease. In other words, no known contact can be traced to other infected individuals.

**Contact tracing:** Identifying and monitoring people who may have come into contact with an infectious person. In the case of COVID-19, monitoring usually involves self-quarantine as an effort to control the spread of disease.

**Coronavirus:** A family of viruses that include SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome) as well as other respiratory illnesses. A coronaviruses, also known as a CoV, is typically spread between animals and humans—an event known as zoonotic transfer—and they are named for the term “corona”—Latin for crown—which refers to the shape of the virus when observed microscopically.

**COVID-19:** COVID-19 stands for coronavirus disease 2019, which refers to the year of its initial detection. COVID-19 is the illness related to the current pandemic; the illness is caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2).

**Flattening the curve:** An attempt to create a more gradual uptake of cases, rather than a steep rise, in an effort to avoid overwhelming the health care system. Notably, “flattening the curve” does not necessarily decreases the projected number of cases, but spreads them out over a period of time.

**Outbreak:** A sudden increase in the number of cases of a particular disease in a relatively small geographical area. COVID-19 is thought to have originated in the Hubei Province in China. Also see related term “pandemic.”

**Pandemic:** A disease prevalent throughout an entire country, continent or the whole world. A pandemic is an epidemic that has spread over a large area.

**PPE:** Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is specialized clothing and equipment used as a safeguard against health hazards including exposure to infectious diseases through physical contact with infected patients. PPE is designed to protect parts of the body typically exposed in normal attire, including the nose, mouth, eyes, hands and feet. Notably, N95 respirators are considered ideal for healthcare workers who may be exposed to SARS-CoV-2.

**PUI:** Person under investigation, or a PUI, is an individual who is suspected of potentially having COVID-19.

**Respirator:** A device designed to protect individuals from inhaling something hazardous in the air. In this case, particulate that may be contaminated with the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

**SARS-CoV-2:** The virus fully defined as “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2” that causes the disease COVID-19.

**Self-isolation:** The practice of separating oneself from others because one is ill in order to prevent the spread of disease. Strategies include confining oneself to a single room/bathroom during the recovery period and not going out in public until the danger of transmission has passed.

**Self-quarantine:** The practice of separating oneself from others because one has been exposed to a disease. In the case of COVID-19, people who suspect they might have been exposed to the virus should self-quarantine for 14 days.

**Shelter-in-place:** Typically issued by local government, a shelter-in-place asks residents to remain at home and only leave to perform duties deemed essential in an effort to slow transmission of and exposure to the virus.

**Social/physical distancing:** Helping to prevent spread of disease by remaining out of crowded public places, avoiding mass gatherings and maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet or 2 meters from others when possible.

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### Glossary of Terms

**Epidemic versus Pandemic**

While an epidemic, a temporary prevalence or rapid spread of a disease, occurs on a community or regional level, a pandemic is an epidemic that has spread over a large area and has become prevalent throughout an entire country, continent or the whole world.

**Virus versus Bacteria**

Although bacterial and viral infections may cause similar symptoms, they are dissimilar in many ways, including the way they respond to medications. Most bacteria are harmless, and some actually help by digesting food, destroying disease-causing microbes, fighting cancer cells and providing essential nutrients. Most viruses on the other hand do cause disease with certain exceptions like Helper T cells, the liver, respiratory system or blood. Unfortunately, antibiotics are not effective against viruses.

**Respirator versus Ventilator**

A respirator is a face mask that seals around the mouth and filters out particles from the air before they are breathed in. An N95 respirator filters out 95 percent of tiny test particles. A ventilator is a machine that moves air in and out of the lungs in the case that a patient is having trouble breathing on their own.

**Quarantine versus Isolation**

Isolation and quarantine are practices used to prevent exposure to people who have or may have a contagious disease. However, while isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick, quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.

**Flu versus COVID-19**

While COVID-19 shares many similarities with the flu, there are several differences between the two. While flu symptoms are typically rapidly onset and can take 1-4 days to develop, COVID-19 symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear and may not appear at all. The two illnesses share symptoms such as fever, cough, and fatigue. However, shortness of breath is a major symptom to look out for with COVID-19. There is no vaccine for COVID-19 at this time.