

# COVID-19 EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLAN DEVELOPMENTS

*Hodgson Russ Employee Benefits Alert*  
March 19, 2020

As the impact of the COVID-19 virus reverberates throughout the U.S. economy, employers soon will be called upon to address employee benefit issues related to extended employee absences or reductions in hours due to illness or leaves of absence. New legislation and regulation at both the federal and state levels may require immediate changes to the administration of group health plans, as rules affecting permissible cost-sharing and deductible provisions have already been proposed. In addition, layoffs, furloughs and reductions in hours may impact eligibility under group welfare plans, and employers should carefully review plan documents and insurance contracts before establishing benefits continuation policies. We anticipate that the President's emergency declaration and similar state and local declarations may raise participant questions about the availability of plan loans and hardship distributions from qualified retirement plans. We expect that changes affecting welfare and retirement plans will continue to unfold rapidly and we will monitor the situation and provide updates regarding evolving employee benefits legal compliance issues, including any possible relief from upcoming regulatory deadlines.

Click [here](#) to review our article regarding the impact of COVID-19 testing and treatment on the status of high deductible health plans.

Please contact any member of Hodgson Russ's Employee Benefits Practice to ask your questions about how COVID-19 may impact your employee benefit plans and discuss strategies to continue to provide benefits to your employees under these unusual circumstances.

If you received this alert from a third party or from visiting our website, and would like to be added to our Employee Benefits Practice alert mailing list or any other of our mailing lists, please visit us at: <https://forms.hodgsonruss.net/subscription-center-hr.html>

## Attorneys

Peter Bradley  
Michael Flanagan  
Richard Kaiser  
Ryan Murphy  
Amy Walters

## Practices & Industries

Employee Benefits

