

April 14, 2021

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HRMORNING

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HRMorning, part of the SuccessFuel Network, provides the latest HR and benefits and employment law news for HR professionals in the trenches of small-to-medium-sized businesses. Rather than simply regurgitating the day's headlines, **HRMorning** delivers actionable insights, helping HR execs understand what HR trends mean to their business.

American Rescue Plan Act: What you need to know now

■ Changes to COBRA, emergency paid sick leave ...

The rush to get the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) passed by the House and the Senate, and signed into law by President Joe Biden was completed on March 12.

And if you haven't heard, parts of it affect employers.

Here's what you need to know:

COBRA coverage

The government's subsidy was changed from 85% to 100% of COBRA premiums for assistance-eligible individuals (employees, former employees, covered spouse or covered dependents) who lost their employer

sponsored health benefits. This applies to people who were involuntarily terminated or had a reduction of work hours.

The special election period started April 1 and runs through Sept. 30, 2021, and applies to anyone who didn't elect COBRA continuation coverage but would've been eligible for it. In addition, anyone who elected coverage and discontinued it before April 1, 2021 is eligible.

Employers are required to notify covered individuals about the availability of the COBRA subsidy, so the DOL is releasing model notices

(Please turn to Rescue Plan ... Page 2)

RETENTION

Gender gap in workplace growing: 3 keys to stop it

The pandemic's had a negative impact on women in the workplace.

Why is this?

Because caregiving responsibilities and other unpaid, informal labor are performed by women the majority of the time.

In 2020 alone, it's estimated that women lost more than 5 million jobs, according to the new report "The gender gap widens: Three critical actions required to support women in the workplace" by Perceptyx.

Steps to stop the loss

Unfortunately, the report also found this negative effect isn't stopping. But there are things firms

can do to help mitigate future impacts on gender equity and inclusion:

- **Prepare for fewer women in the office** – Job postings that require candidates to work in the office will receive fewer female applicants. Flexibility is key.
- **Take actions to minimize promotion and compensation bias** – Four in 10 employees who work at home at least part time receive fewer evaluations, less recognition and fewer promotions. Keep that in mind.
- **Consider what women want to boost retention.** Different factors motivate women like a flexible, hybrid work schedule.

Info: bit.ly/Women624

Rescue Plan ...

(continued from Page 1)

soon, as well as COBRA coverage expiration notices.

The new COBRA notices must include:

- forms for establishing eligibility for premium assistance
- name, address and phone number of the plan administrator
- description of the extended special election period
- individuals' obligation to notify the plan if they become eligible for coverage under another plan, and
- description of the beneficiary's right to a subsidized premium and any conditions to entitlement.

Once the notices are sent out, eligible individuals are allowed 60 days after receiving it to elect coverage, and won't be required to pay the premium during that period.

COBRA premiums for self-insured plans are covered by the employer and reimbursed through a payroll tax credit. For fully insured plans, the tax

credit is claimable by the insurer.

While the ARPA tasked the DOL and IRS with issuing regs and guidance on the application and administration of the COBRA subsidy provisions,

COBRA premiums covered 100%.

experts highly recommend employers consult a tax expert before filing.

Emergency paid sick, family leave

If you're providing paid sick leave and paid family leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the ARPA extends the tax credit until Sept. 30, 2021. It also resets the 10-day limit for the tax credit for paid sick leave to April 1, 2021.

In addition to the current reason for taking emergency sick or family leave, the following reasons were added:

- obtaining COVID-19 vaccine
- recovering from any injury, disability, illness or condition related to the COVID-19 vaccine, or
- getting or awaiting the results of a diagnostic test or medical diagnosis for COVID-19.

However, firms that discriminate against highly compensated employees, full-time employees or employees on the basis of tenure with the employer when determining eligibility don't get the tax credit.

Other changes

For 2021 only, employers have the option to extend their dependent care assistance program or dependent care flexible spending account to cap from \$5,000 (or \$2,500 for separate married returns) to \$10,500 (or \$5,250 for separate married returns).

And the Paycheck Protection Program gets an addition \$7 billion.

Info: bit.ly/RescuePlan624, bit.ly/ARPA624, bit.ly/COBRA624

SHARPEN YOUR BENEFITS JUDGMENT

This feature provides a framework for decision making that helps keep you and your company out of trouble. It describes a recent legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.

■ Fired worker didn't finish PIP, claimed age discrimination

Benefits Manager Betty Murphy was finishing up her lunch when she realized her Zoom meeting was about to start with Barry Kane, the company lawyer.

"Hey, Barry," said Betty, "how ya doing this afternoon?"

"I'll be better once this lawsuit is behind us," said Barry. "How does someone work for a company for 10 years and get good reviews and promotions, and then tank?"

"Paul started doing poorly after we were bought out," said Betty. "He didn't get along with the new executives, got frustrated and just stopped putting in the effort. Once that happened his department stopped attaining its goals."

Replaced with younger manager

"When was he put on the six-month PIP?" asked Barry.

"In March," said Betty.

"He was let go after two months?" asked Barry.

"Yes," answered Betty. "The PIP required him to achieve certain goals every month and he didn't."

"What about the other employee Paul was talking about who was placed on a PIP and was given more time?" asked Barry.

"She improved every month and attained the goals set out for her in the PIP," said Betty. "Two totally different cases."

"I hope the court agrees with you," said Barry.

The court agreed with Betty's firm and ruled in its favor, but Paul appealed. Did the company prevail?

■ *Make your decision, then please turn to Page 6 for the court's ruling.*



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Firms land in hot water for OT and worker's rights violations

This regular feature highlights recent case settlements, court awards and fines against companies. It serves as a reminder to keep benefits policies in order.

Staffing agency's up the creek without a paddle

What happened: A staffing agency for the marine and shipbuilding industries cheated its workers out of overtime pay violating FLSA.

What people did: Quality Marine Staffing LLC in Pascagoula, MS, intentionally mislabeled a portion of employees' hours as "per diem" payment, at an hourly rate, and paid that hourly payment at straight time for overtime hours. The agency also failed to maintain accurate payroll records as required by the FLSA.

Result: To resolve these violations, the agency paid \$46,372 in back wages to 45 employees.

Info: bit.ly/StaffAgency624

450 home health workers split \$2.1M in back wages

What happened: An investigation by the DOL's Wage and Hour Division found a home healthcare agency in Philadelphia denied its employees fair wages.

What people did: Good Family Support Services Inc., operator of Good Family Support Services, a non-profit organization, paid family care workers on an hourly basis, but paid straight-time rates for overtime hours. The agency also failed to record the number of hours that two employees worked, and failed to record hourly rates, violating FLSA recordkeeping requirements.

Result: After being denied their proper overtime rate for two years, 450 workers will split \$2.1 million.

Info: bit.ly/HomeHealth624

Worker's rights violated, receives \$290K, reinstated

What happened: In Fort Worth, TX, BNSF Railway Co. accused an employee of violating a doctor's restrictions against physical activity following a work-related injury. The worker denied the allegations and produced documents during a hearing to prove his doctor didn't prohibit him from doing physical activity. Despite that, the company fired him.

What people did: The worker filed a suit and OSHA found BNSF violated federal law.

Result: OSHA ordered the railway to reinstate the worker, and pay back wages, attorney's fees and compensatory damages to the tune of \$290,000.

Info: bit.ly/RailwayCo624

Landscaper dug deep ditch by paying workers illegally

What happened: A federal investigation found Aaction Scape Inc. in Orlando, FL, paid employees illegally for the hours that they worked.

What people did: By incorrectly classifying workers as exempt from overtime requirements and paying them flat biweekly salaries, regardless of the number of hours they worked, Aaction Scape violated FLSA. Specifically, the employer failed to pay workers the additional half time required by FLSA when they worked more than 40 hours in a workweek. In addition, the employer failed to keep a record of the number of hours the employees worked.

Result: Now, the Orlando Landscaper will pay \$48,978 in back wages to 39 workers.

Info: bit.ly/Landscaper624

One in five employees worked while sick during pandemic

There's light at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic tunnel, with vaccines becoming more widely available every day.

While everyone is eager to get back to normal, the pandemic has had a major impact on work life, and some changes employers made during this health crisis are here to stay, like remote work.

Another thing the pandemic brought to light was ensuring employees stayed home when they were sick. Pre-pandemic, it wasn't unusual for people to come into work with a cold or the flu.

But according to a recent study, despite the severity of COVID-19, one in five employees still came into work during the pandemic – signifying a much bigger problem.

Why they came in

The study, conducted by Just Capital and the Harris Poll, surveyed 1,000 U.S. employees and 300 employers.

Of the workers who reported coming into work, here's a breakdown of why:

- 33% worried they'd lose their jobs if they didn't come in
- 33% said they didn't have access to paid leave, and
- 28% didn't want to upset their boss.

The numbers get more alarming when 13% reported they were discouraged from reporting their illness, and 37% of employees felt that company profits were put ahead of employee safety.

It's concerning how many people felt pressured to continue working with an illness during a deadly pandemic, bringing to light the need for paid sick leave and employer encouragement for workers to actually stay home while feeling unwell.

Companies have a chance now to change policies and lead by example.

Info: bit.ly/sick624

Study shows 35% of workers don't understand their benefits

Some Benefits pros and their firms need to do a better job of educating employees on their benefits.

Reason: “Thirty-five percent of employed individuals report not fully understanding any of the employee benefits they enrolled in during their most recent open enrollment period,” according to a new survey by Voya Financial. And the number jumps to 54% among millennials.

But don't fret. The survey also revealed 66% of employees and 78% of millennials will be turning to you in 2021 – and not just during open enrollment – for education, support and guidance on benefit offerings.

Spotlight financial wellbeing

One major focus for Benefits pros should be helping employees with their financial wellbeing.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents said they want “support and guidance tools” to give them a better understanding of what they need to save for retirement, emergency savings and healthcare expenses.

“Supplemental health benefits like

accident insurance, hospital indemnity insurance and critical illness insurance can be confusing – especially for younger workers, who might have enrolled in these coverages for the first time due to the pandemic,” said Andrew Friend, SVP of product and strategy, Voya employee benefits.

Make it simple

While you may give employees tons of info on the benefits you offer, who wants to read it all or has the time?

Simplify the info you offer – workers don't need to know everything, just what's needed to understand if they need this benefit. Then provide additional info links for a deeper delve.

Also, make it easy to understand. Take out the HR/Benefits jargon, and make sure it's in plain English.

Finally, create engaging education programs that provide year-round benefits education. Friend says they've helped their employees understand and maximize their workplace benefits by offering innovative digital tools.

Info: bit.ly/Benefits624, bit.ly/Educate624

Working on site again calls for special communication

Nearly 75% of executives plan to have all staff back on site by July, a PwC survey found.

And many of those employees – yours included – are a little skeptical about safety, health and productivity.

The key to putting employees' minds at ease and their heads back in the benefits game? Good communication while you transition.

“These fears are neither surprising nor irrational,” says Ron Carucci, co-founder and managing partner at Navalent and author of *Rising to Power*.

4 keys

To help employees adapt, Carucci suggests these strategies:

- **Up the communication.** Share what's going on – and why – so employees can rationalize it. You might work with other leaders to form a communication task force to share updates, as well as identify bottlenecks, breakdowns and misinformation.

- **Be honest.** Don't mask your anxiety behind fake confidence or positivity. Tell employees if you're a bit anxious, too. And emphasize that you're ready to face challenges and talk about them.

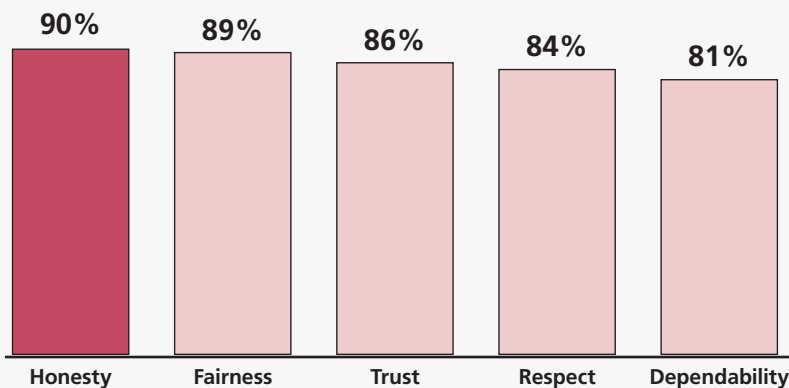
- **Communicate patience, flexibility.** What's happening now will likely change soon – and you'll need to continue to update employees and get their feedback. Relay changes as a positive sign the company is learning, adapting and improving your workplace.

- **Be a source of joy.** Inject some levity into work. One manager asks employees to share a “work from home mishap” and “unexpected delight” to kick off meetings again. And be safe: Replace high-fives and handshakes with positive notes and congratulatory email messages.

Sources: tinyurl.com/survey624, tinyurl.com/Carucci624

Desires and dislikes

What do employees want from management?



Source: *What People Want* by Terry Bacon; bit.ly/SESCO624

Now that you know what employees want from their managers, here's what they don't want: friendship, conversation, TLC, emotional support, cheerfulness.

WHAT WORKED FOR OTHER COMPANIES

Our readers come from a broad range of companies, both large and small. In this regular section, three of them share success stories you can adapt to fit your needs.

1 Reminded employees to take paid time off

The coronavirus was causing unused paid time off (PTO) to pile up for some of our people.

Due to the pandemic, their vacation plans were on hold. And because many of our employees were worried about potential layoffs, they felt they had to work harder and not miss a day.

But our people aren't allowed to carry over unused PTO, so they have to use it or lose it.

Also, a staffing disaster was on the

horizon if everybody decided to use up their PTO at once, especially if they took it during our busiest time of the year.

Take some days off

I sent periodic email reminders to our employees that made it clear there would be certain times when a limited number of people would be allowed to be off.

They were also reminded that they'd lose their remaining PTO if they didn't take it by the end of the year.

It helped that plenty

of our people needed to take time off from work to set up homeschooling for their children in compliance with their local school board. This was particularly important for employees that had kids in kindergarten, first- or second-grade.

Persistent encouragement to take a day off with pay, preferably during a time with minimal deadlines, paid off. There were very few employees at year's end that hadn't used up their well-deserved time off.

(Amy Meckel, president, R.E. Smith Interests, Houston)

**REAL
PROBLEMS
REAL
SOLUTIONS**

everybody's hours worked in their respective anniversary year.

2 When part-timers become 401(k)-eligible

Because the nature of our business is seasonal, a lot of our employees worked for us seasonally and part-time.

A benefit of having so many seasonal workers meant hardly any issues caused by regulations in the different states we operated in.

However, when it came to finding who among these workers was eligible to invest with our 401(k) provider, it was confusing.

Our company decided part-timers

that had been with us three years and worked at least 1,000 hours were entitled to our 401(k) benefit.

Because everybody's date of hire was different, the parameters of their "anniversary" years are different. It got labor-intensive to track, and I needed some guidance.

Who to call?

First, I reached out to our payroll vendor to find out how to generate a report that shows me

Then I called our 401(k) provider to double-check if there are federal rule changes related to retirement accounts, and if there's anything we needed to change on our end.

Getting that expert assistance was key. Now none of our part-time employees miss getting notified about their 401(k) eligibility.

(Cindy Maulick, payroll specialist, W. Atlee Burpee Co., Warminster, PA)

3 Encouraged use of mental health benefit

There are very few things that have impacted the world the way the pandemic has. Over the past year, it's caused difficult moments for everyone at our company at some point.

We quickly realized what a big deal our employees' mental wellbeing is and so did our health insurance carrier.

For the duration of the national emergency, they waived copays and deductibles for telehealth mental

health consultations.

Because a bunch of our staffers were working remotely on any given day, it was going to be challenging to ensure that everyone was aware of this important info.

Frequent reminders

Through regular companywide emails, we recommended that our people take advantage of up to three mental health counseling sessions with the same provider at no out of pocket cost.

Because this was such a valuable

healthcare service during these unprecedented times, our insurance carrier also sent out email reminders to our employees. The response was positive.

Then during open enrollment, we reminded everybody one-on-one about mental health care and all the other benefits that were available. As a result, our people took a much greater interest in reviewing their benefits.

(Julie Bennett, vice president of finance, First West Insurance, Bozeman, MT)

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Updated return-to-work considerations

The COVID-19 situation is constantly changing, and because of that, so are the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) official guidelines.

Just recently, the CDC gave the green light for completely vaccinated people to gather indoors without masks or social distancing.

With this announcement and everyone ready to get back to normal, a lot of people might incorrectly assume workplace safety measures aren't necessary anymore.

But there are still a lot of considerations employers must make.

Ask yourself this

Before bringing workers back full time, here are some questions you should ask yourself, straight from the CDC's website:

1. Are any employees primary caregivers, or do they live with someone at higher risk of a severe case of COVID-19? Some accommodations like remote work may still have to be made for certain employees who have people at home depending on them.

2. How long will employees be interacting with each other? Can you minimize those? You may have

to reorganize the layout of your workspace to keep people as distanced as possible. It's also a good idea to continue virtual meetings to prevent overcrowding in conference rooms.

Lawyer recommendations

With certain regulations relaxing, it's up to employers to figure out what kind of COVID-19 safety protocols they want to have.

Here are recommendations from employment law attorneys Mark Goldstein and Alexandra Manfredi of the firm Reed Smith LLP:

1. Employee screenings. Employers should continue to take workers' temperatures and inquire about possible COVID-19 symptoms.

2. Face coverings. Employees should still be wearing masks in the workplace, especially when social distance isn't possible. Employers should provide face coverings.

3. Written safety plan. Companies with in-person operations must have a written plan detailing all the protocols they have in place to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

4. Travel procedures. Some travel restrictions are still in place, so it's

WHAT BENEFITS EXEC'S SAID

Job being equal, I would leave just for a higher salary

66%

Men who agreed

60%

Women who agreed

Source: Salary and compensation statistics on the impact of COVID-19 by Randstad; bit.ly/Salary624

You might think the pandemic would put job stability or benefits, like flexibility, high on employees checklist. While that might be the case, salary is still at the top of the list for both sexes.

(Each issue of WNB&C contains a current survey to give benefits officers insight into what their peers nationwide are thinking and doing.)

important to make sure employees are complying with these. Consider if workers should isolate upon returning from their trip.

5. Sick leave. While federal-mandated COVID-19 sick leave has expired, employers still may want to offer this benefit.

Info: bit.ly/guidance624, bit.ly/CDC624

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(See case on Page 2.)

Yes. The appeals court ruled the firm provided a legitimate reason to terminate Paul: his poor performance, as documented by more than three years of poor reviews.

In an attempt to show pretext for his Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) claim, Paul argued that the company treated him differently than another employee whose PIP was extended after the first six months.

But Paul provided no evidence about her work, her progress on the PIP or her performance history. As such, he failed to show the firm "deviated inexplicably from one of [their] standard business practices" and, therefore, failed to demonstrate their decision was a pretext for age discrimination for several reasons:

- First, the PIP made clear that he could lose his job if

he failed to comply with and successfully surpass the minimum plan requirements.

- Second, the PIP neither stated nor implied that Paul couldn't be fired until the six months were up.
- Third, Paul failed to meet the PIP's minimum performance requirements in its first two months.

Analysis: Document reviews and PIPs

PIPs have long been used to help poorly performing employees get back on track. But what happens when the employee's performance while on the PIP continues to decline? Do you have to keep them?

No. This case shows you can fire them as long as you have the documentation of the performance reviews and PIPs on file.

Cite: *Santana-Vargas v. Banco Santander Puerto Rico*, No. 18-1990 (1st Cir. 1/27/20). Dramatized for effect.

Employee resources group supported mental health benefits

■ Conversations normalize asking for help

Even before the pandemic, we realized that mental health isn't just a perk. It's just as important as preventive physical health care.

We collaborated with different partners to design a program that addresses the full spectrum of needs, from mild symptoms like stress to anxiety disorders and even severe issues like suicidal thoughts and actions.

But it didn't happen overnight.

Early on, our mental health care provider offered therapy options. But employee feedback data revealed needs requiring resources beyond therapy alone.

Talking about it

We followed up with our employees about what they said in surveys and discovered a few people that were passionate about educating others on taking care of their mental health.

An employee resources group organically grew out these conversations and they asked to start holding virtual meetings on their own company Slack channel.

Later leadership partnered with the group and speakers were brought in to lead workshops on topics like parenting challenges and coping with loneliness during COVID-19.

Personal testimonials from executives helped take the stigma out of utilizing mental health care.

Program evolved

When we added mental health coaching and encouraged the use of self-care apps like Calm, we saw how important it is to recognize that different people have different needs at different times.

For example, back to school time

triggered severe anxiety for some of the parents in our workforce.

They're getting the care they need.

Employee use of our mental health resources increased over the past year and it's encouraging to know they're getting the care they need.

Case Study:

WHAT WORKED, WHAT DIDN'T

Where to start

Finding meaningful solutions to fit your organization doesn't have to be a long, drawn-out process.

Webinars on behavioral and mental health can be helpful because you can hear about what other businesses have tried.

It's also worth asking your benefits brokers and consultants what they have to offer.

Try surveying your employees to get a sense of how they're feeling. Are they as productive now as they were in 2019? Are they struggling with work/life balance?

Multidimensional mental health support leads to a reduction in the costs from absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover, while maintaining positive company culture.

Launching a continuum of mental health benefits has made our employees feel supported. They're more resilient and productive.

(Alice Vichaita, head of global benefits, Pinterest, as presented during the webinar Full-Spectrum Care: Designing a Mental Health Solution that Supports Everyone)

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

■ Zoom fatigue is bad for physical, mental health

Video platforms, like Zoom, are company lifelines during the pandemic.

But now experts are saying there are "psychological consequences" to spending multiple hours a day on these platforms. Do you know why?

Test your knowledge: Decide whether the following statements are *True* or *False*. Then check your responses against the answers below.

1. Depending on the size of your monitor, when people's faces are big and close, the brain interprets the situation as intense, and one that'll lead to mating or conflict.
2. There's a lot of research that shows looking at yourself in a mirror has negative emotional consequences.
3. During a long Zoom meeting going audio only and turning your back to the computer allows your brain to rest.

ANSWERS

- Answers to the quiz**
1. *True*. When a person's face is that big and close to you in person, it stimulates the personal space of an intimate (mating or conflict) situation. So Zooming for hours, puts your brain in a hyper-aroused state. One solution is don't view Zoom meetings in the full-screen option. The grid pattern allows more personal space.
 2. *True*. Being on Zoom for hours and seeing themselves causes people to be extra critical of themselves. It's like being in an office and having someone follow them around and hold up a mirror whenever they talk to another person. Avoid this by using the "hide self-view" button.
 3. *True*. Turning your back on the computer allows your brain to stop interpreting everyone's nonverbal cues and rest.
- Info: bit.ly/ZoomFatigue624

DOL places 2 final rules on chopping block

The DOL recently announced proposals to rescind two final rules it feels would weaken protections for workers under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

The first would withdraw the Independent Contractor Final Rule for the following reasons:

- it adopted a new “economic reality” test to determine whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor
- courts and the DOL haven’t used the new test and longstanding case law doesn’t support the test, and
- it would minimize other factors traditionally used when establishing if a worker is an employee.

The second would revoke the March 16, 2020 reg on joint employer relationships under the FLSA.

Due to a lawsuit from 17 states and the District of Columbia against the DOL, most of the rule was vacated by the court in September on the ground it was contrary to the FLSA.

Info: bit.ly/2Rules624

Worker’s spouse blames firm for getting COVID-19

Here’s an interesting question: Can an employer be blamed for a worker’s spouse contracting COVID-19 if it had poor safety practices?

Robert Kuciemba worked at a San Francisco construction site for Victory Woodworks Inc. In July, workers from Victory’s Mountain View, CA job site were transferred to Kuciemba’s job site. And according to the lawsuit, the transfer took place after workers there became infected with COVID-19.

At the time, San Francisco County’s health officer had issued an order that required construction sites to have strict COVID-19 protocols in place.

Kuciemba alleged that he was forced to work in close contact with one of the transferred workers, who he says proceeded to infect him with COVID-19. Kuciemba and his wife tested positive in mid-July, and both

were eventually hospitalized.

Kuciemba’s wife sued on the grounds that the company was liable for causing her to contract COVID-19 by failing to maintain adequate safety standards.

The court ruled that the wife didn’t have standing – the ability to bring a lawsuit in court – to file a public nuisance claim and dismissed the case.

Info: bit.ly/Wife624

More enforcement action from DOL likely this year

New data from the DOL shows why Benefits pros have to ensure workers are being classified correctly so firms don’t end up in trouble.

The DOL finished up 26,096 cases in 2020, recovering approximately \$258 million in back wages. Most of the cases involved minimum wage and FLSA overtime violations. They accounted for 8,495 cases and 8,211 cases, respectively.

And this enforcement action’s not looking to slow down. Due to federal recommendations and other changes, you’ll likely see more DOL investigations – and less leniency for mistakes – in 2021.

Info: bit.ly/Enforcement624

Unlimited time off: Can it save firms money?

Working remotely has blurred the line between work and life. And now some employees feel they shouldn’t be limited to a certain number of days off in a year.

Don’t refuse it right away because it can actually save employers money.

If employees don’t have a set number of days off, then at the end of the year or when they leave you don’t have to pay them for unused days.

Unlimited days off is also less responsibility for Benefits pros because employees can take as much as they want for whatever reason – no need to track.

It’s also a great recruitment tool!

Info: bit.ly/UnlimitedVaca624

HOT APPS & WEBSITES

■ Checklist to help HR to adapt

As companies evolve from the pandemic, Benefits pros have to change, too. Here’s a checklist that’ll guarantee you cover all the steps when updating HR strategies.

Click: bit.ly/HRChecklist624

■ Key to doing a DE&I audit

A diverse workforce can help attract and retain top talent. Are your diversity efforts working? Not sure? Download this white paper from *salary.com* on how to do a diversity, equity and inclusion audit.

Click: bit.ly/Diversity624

■ Healthcare spending habits

Want insights into healthcare spending and saving habits? Download this free ebook for new research from HealthEquity.

Click: bit.ly/SpendSave624

If you have a benefits-related question, email it to Renee Cocchi at: rcocchi@HRMorning.com

LIGHTER SIDE

■ Barefoot psychiatrist acts as if it’s business as usual?

Working remotely it’s no big deal if you don’t put shoes on. Who’ll see?

But back when we were going into the office, many people probably had days when they were late and rushing to get ready and arrived at work with two different socks on or even two different shoes. But what about no shoes at all?

A Virginia psychotherapist liked to drive barefoot, but one day when she got to her office she realized she forgot to grab her shoes. She didn’t want to drive home and be late for patients, so she went about her day as if nothing was wrong.

She greeted patients and walked them to her office barefoot. Not one person said a word to her. Wonder if she broke the dress code?

Info: bit.ly/Barefoot624