

September 21, 2020
M20-023

TO: SPEEA Council
FROM: SPEEA Council's Legislative & Public Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: **PRESUBMITTED NEW BUSINESS:** COVID-19 Transparency with Employees

Background

The Covid-19 Pandemic is forcing the US and the world to confront infectious diseases spread during modern air travel and how the US and businesses should have had an infectious disease preparedness and response plans. The lack of US action and the lack of business planning resulted in a wide range of responses to the employees and the public.

Some employers did not notify employees or the public due to the disruption of their business.
Some employers state that HIPPA prevents them from reporting.
Some employers did not notify the employees or the Public Health because the infection was not confirmed.

- The employers' reluctance to notify public health agencies and employees creates needless risk for virus transmission.
- The lack of information creates distrust among employees and the public.
- The lack of warning runs afoul of advice from public safety officials and experts.

According to guidance from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, "employers should **inform and encourage employees** to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 if they suspect possible exposure."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **recommends employers inform workers about a potential exposure** if another employee is "confirmed to have a COVID-19 infection."

While employers frequently worry about releasing private health information, Caplan, the NYU medical professor, said organizations should err on the side of transparency. "When you're in an epidemic — a plague — you have to shift your orientation to protecting others," he said. "There's not much excuse for not doing it."

Pro: Employees will be protected on their jobsite with knowledge and quarantine
Con: Employees are becoming infected because they are not aware of exposure

Motion

It is moved that: **THE SPEEA COUNCIL SUPPORTS EMPLOYER DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL PANDEMIC EXPOSURE TO EMPLOYEES.**

Prior to council action (voting) on any proposal for legislative or public affairs, the SPEEA Council's Legislative & Public Affairs Committee shall investigate and produce both pro and con statements and a majority committee recommendation.

Passage or adoption of any legislative or public issues proposal shall be by published ballot and require: Total affirmative vote must be a majority of all Council Representatives including those not present excluding Council Representatives working in excess of 50 statute air miles from the meeting and are unable to attend.