



CLL SOCIETY

CLL Society's Official Statement Concerning Workplace Accommodations Required for Those Living with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia/Small Lymphocytic Lymphoma (CLL/SLL) Pandemic Related to COVID-19

Recommendation (updated 2/1/2023):

For their highest degree of safety, people with CLL/SLL should continue to seek accommodation, when possible, to work at home during the COVID-19 pandemic when their work in an office or other setting involves exposure to multiple coworkers and/or the public.

Background and Rationale:

CLL Society, the largest nonprofit exclusively dedicated to addressing the unmet needs of the chronic lymphocytic leukemia/small lymphocytic lymphoma (CLL/SLL) blood cancer communities, in consultation with members of its Medical Advisory Board and outside Infectious Disease experts, continues to urge all individuals living with CLL/SLL to avoid exposure to COVID-19.

While for many the pandemic's risks have decreased, all those with CLL/SLL, whether young or old, and regardless of their treatment status are considered moderately to severely immunocompromised who are often not well protected by COVID-19 vaccinations. Moreover, recent data confirms that while their risk of dying from COVID-19 has improved from the earlier waves in the pandemic, they remain at higher risk of hospitalization, ICU admission and death compared to the immunocompetent population. Additionally, some of those with CLL/SLL who do become infected with COVID-19 may have a difficult time fighting off the virus. They continue to test positive and can remain contagious for weeks and sometimes even months.

Therefore, people with CLL/SLL generally would be safer if they did not leave home to work where they will be in contact with others.

If those with CLL/SLL have no other option but to work indoors with other co-workers and/or the public, reasonable workplace accommodations should be offered that go beyond the recommendations provided by public health officials that are only intended for the broader community who are not immunocompromised. These accommodations could include among others:

- Ensuring social distancing by all other employees.
- Strongly suggesting when in contact with a vulnerable individual, coworkers wear a N95 or KN95 mask, preferably one that is provided free of charge to any staff who requests one.
- Installing HEPA filtration systems and improving workspace ventilation and air filtration.
- Providing signage encouraging all employees to wash hands frequently and providing hand-sanitizing stations.
- Monitoring for COVID-19 cases within the work setting and immediately notifying the employee if they have had possible contact with an infected individual. Most COVID19 treatments for those with CLL/SLL are time sensitive so early diagnosis is critical.
- Offering the employee their own private, fully walled-off workspace.

Again, these are stricter than the recommendations for the general population, but people with CLL/SLL are in a high-risk immunocompromised group and as such should seek the accommodations they deserve.

Sincerely,

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Executive Vice President, Chief Medical Officer
CLL Society Inc.