

Amber Health Care for Women – Obstetrics and Gynecology

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To Our Patients and Their Employers,

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Amidst this pandemic, we are all struggling together to determine what is safe for our patients, employees, and for the public in general. Many changes have been made to government programs, to help individuals whose health, family, or place of employment have been affected by COVID-19. More information is available on the State of CA EDD website at: https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

An employee may file a claim for State Disability, if they are sick due to having COVID-19, or quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19 (as certified by a medical professional).

An employee may file a claim for Paid Family Leave, if they are unable to work because they are caring for an ill or quarantined family member with COVID-19 (certified by a medical professional), they can file for

An employee may file a claim for Unemployment Benefits, if their employer has reduced their work hours or shut down operations due to COVID-19.

Your employee is currently pregnant, and a patient under my care. As of today, we are under a shelter-in-place mandate, but many jobs are deemed “essential” (such as jobs in the fields of healthcare, banking, food-distribution, etc.), and these employees continue to be a part of the work-force.

Pregnant women are known to have a mildly suppressed immune system, to be at increased risk of catching influenza if exposed, and of developing influenza complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia. It is unknown if the same holds true for COVID-19. Co-morbidities that have been shown to increase the risk of serious COVID-19-related complications include age >65, and underlying diabetes, heart, or lung disease.

Currently, pregnancy in-of-itself, does not qualify a pregnant patient (at less than 36 weeks) for California State Disability. To the best of our knowledge, no specific recommendations have been made by the Surgeon General or by the government, with regards to removing pregnant employees from the workplace, and in particular from “essential” jobs.

That being said, as a doctor, I feel it would be wise for all employers to try to minimize a pregnant employee’s exposure to COVID-19. Depending upon a pregnant patient’s job description, employers may wish to consider if it is possible to relocate employees, change their job duties, have them work from home, etc. Please help work with your employees to try to keep them as safe as possible.