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## ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

**To:** All Department of Labor Staff  
**From:** Michael Harrington, Interim Labor Commissioner  
**Date:** March 14, 2020  
**Subject:** Administrative Memo No. 1: Expanding Unemployment Insurance Benefits in Response to COVID-19

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The following memorandum outlines special consideration for unemployment insurance (UI) claimants who are impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. The issuance of this memorandum is at the direction of the Governor of Vermont as outlined in [Executive Order No. 01-20](#).

**Able and Available Determinations:** Staff shall not deny claims for able and available issues due to a claimant being isolated or quarantined at the direction of a health care official due to potential or verified exposure to the COVID-19 disease. These individuals shall be treated as temporarily unemployed through no fault of their own, and able and available, for the purpose of UI benefits.

**Work Search Requirement Waiver:** For employees who are impacted by a temporary closure of a business and have been provided with a return to work date within the current ten-week period, the work search requirement should remain waived. For individuals who are impacted under #1 of this memorandum, the Department will also waive the work search requirement for the time the individual is in isolation/quarantine.

**Expedited Payment of Benefits:** I have directed Unemployment Insurance Division Director, Cameron Wood, to implement any/all measures necessary to allow for a more expedited benefit



payment process. This includes issuing payments prior to employer confirmation and shortening the Electronic Fund Transfer validation process whenever possible.

This administrative memorandum will take effect immediately and last until rescinded by the Commissioner. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor has released guidance that encourages states to exercise flexibility in authorizing benefits for individuals who are required to self-isolate/quarantine. Specifically, these employees can be considered temporarily laid off and thus eligible for benefits. This guidance supports the actions identified by the Department and supports states' efforts to extend benefit and minimize the impact to employers.

