

HEALTH TRACKER APP ASSISTS ORGANIZATIONS IN REDUCING RISK

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One of the greatest concerns as the economy gradually reopens is maintaining a clean and safe workplace for employees. This concern is only heightened for schools who must not only consider the health and wellbeing of their staff, but also their students.

Technology has proven to be a worthy partner in the quest to slow the spread of COVID-19. As schools continue to fine-tune their plans to reopen, it may be pertinent to consider using a mobile app in order to easily certify the health of employees, through documented self-reporting, before they re-enter the workplace.

M3 has developed an app that prompts employees to answer CDC-recommended questions that help identify symptoms and facilitate conversations with your human resources department, if necessary. In less than a minute each day, the app can provide your school with important health data and prompts employee action when a response is flagged. By leveraging technology, school districts can gain necessary information about an employee's current health status, based on CDC-recommended questions without risking exposure by having another employee ask the questions in a face-to-face setting. We're recommending that schools and organizations that use the app require its use across the board for every employee to ensure a safe environment for all staff and students and avoid discrimination.

You may be wondering, is the information from an app like this protected under HIPAA? We understand the need to protect the privacy of staff who may be using this app to provide symptom-related information. HIPAA only applies to Protected Health Information (PHI), which is information generated by a "covered entity". Employers are not a covered entity (unlike health care providers). The information gathered by the app is for employment purposes, and should be kept confidential, but it is not HIPAA protected information.

Using an app like the one mentioned above is just one of the tools in your toolbox for ensuring your students and staff return to a safe educational facility when school starts again. We recommend speaking with your insurance consultant and risk management team about other options for cleaning and disinfection, as well as best practices for making changes to the facility and maintaining social distancing if necessary.