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Correspondence Memorandum

Date: March 14, 2022

To: Employee Trust Funds Board
Teachers Retirement Board
Wisconsin Retirement Board

From: Pam Henning, Assistant Deputy Secretary
Office of the Secretary

Subject: COVID-19 Pandemic Update

This memo is for informational purposes only. No Board action is required.

Since the December board meeting, ETF has been preparing for its return to a hybrid work environment that began on March 7, 2022.

ETF Onsite Services Continue

Since July 6, ETF has been providing onsite front desk and quick service functions, allowing members to drop off forms or address simple benefit-related questions in person. Onsite one-on-one individual counseling sessions in private counseling rooms also continue with eight appointments four days per week. Plexiglass and additional ventilation were installed in private counseling rooms and at the front desk for member and staff comfort and safety. Virtual appointments continue to be well attended, in addition to offering monthly weeknight and daytime group counseling sessions to provide flexibility for our members.

Return to Office – Hybrid Model

ETF's official new hybrid schedule took effect on March 7, 2022, after following a phased approach to return to the office since last November. This was due to the state employee mask mandate, as well as Public Health Madison and Dane County's mask mandate, which both expired on March 1, 2022.

The hybrid work model allows staff and supervisors to determine the best onsite versus work from home schedule based upon business necessity. The hybrid work model allows supervisors and staff to develop individualized schedules that prioritize onsite coverage and provide staff the opportunity to work from home.

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The extended transition period allowed additional time for staff to acclimate to the many changes within the ETF work spaces. Staff visited ETF to become more familiar with the new technology available in conference rooms, floor and cubicle/office assignments and scheduling process, and other health and safety measures.

ETF will continue to monitor guidance from federal, state, and local health experts as we embrace our new hybrid working environment. ETF's first priority is the health and safety of our staff and the members we serve.

Vaccination and Testing Updates

In addition to the mask mandate ending, effective March 13, the Department of Administration (DOA) ended testing requirements for unvaccinated staff or those not reporting vaccination status. However, all state employees (permanent, project, and limited term) and contractors are still required to report their vaccination status. To date, over 93% of ETF staff have been fully vaccinated.

Next Steps

Construction will begin in mid-March within ETF's 8th and 9th floors to accommodate additional IT storage and a conference room. We will also begin moving our supply and mail services and records functions to the 8th floor to consolidate space and eliminate rental costs for the 7th floor.

I will be available at the March 24 Board meeting to answer any questions.