

CLIENT ALERT

World Health Organization Declares COVID-19 to be a Pandemic

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The World Health Organization has announced its determination that COVID-19 is a pandemic. At a press briefing on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the WHO announced that this is the first time the WHO has declared a pandemic as a result of a coronavirus outbreak. The announcement does not change the WHO's assessment of the threat posed by COVID-19, nor does it require new WHO public health recommendations.

The WHO announcement means that U.S. employers now have additional flexibility to take measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. Guidance issued in 2009 by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in response to the 'swine flu' outbreak authorizes employers to be more aggressive in responding to a pandemic, notwithstanding the obligations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The EEOC guidance suggests that employers may be able to conduct certain types of testing and make more direct inquiries to their employees, as part of a containment plan.

For more information, please contact the professional(s) listed below, or your regular Crowell & Moring contact.

Thomas P. Gies

Partner – Washington, D.C.
Phone: +1 202.624.2690
Email: tgies@crowell.com

Trina Fairley Barlow

Partner – Washington, D.C.
Phone: +1 202.624.2830
Email: tbarlow@crowell.com