

Today, we are taking important steps to address revenue shortfalls in the Department of Health. This is the most challenging economic climate we have ever faced. The combination of reduced federal revenue, operating cost increases and state budget reductions has resulted in insufficient funds to ensure the agency can meet its obligations for the remainder of SFY 2018. We have made some very difficult decisions this past year by reducing refills on positions and cutting operating expenses. Now, we need to do more to meet our continued budgetary pressures. I understand that we have asked a great deal of you, and I regret adding to your burden with these changes.

OSDH is implementing a furlough effective October 29, 2017. This means that most of our employees, including all managers, directors, and senior leadership, will be required to take the equivalent of 8 hours of unpaid leave per pay period. All employees (including part-time employees) making above \$35,000 in gross annual income (before taxes) will be required to take the furlough.

The furlough will continue until long-term budget reductions can be implemented but is not expected to continue beyond June 30, 2018. If we find we can end the furlough sooner, we will communicate that as soon as possible. We are doing this to preserve our operations and ensure we continue to deliver valued public health services to the citizens of Oklahoma.

I am sure you have many questions. To help answer these questions and address your concerns, I am including a Q&A document about the impact of furlough on your pay and benefits. I have also asked each manager to meet with their staff in order to discuss how they will manage the furlough within each department and gather any additional questions not already addressed. We will continually make these updates available to you via <http://irene/coo/HR/FURLOUGH/Forms/AllItems.aspx>. If you continue to have questions, you may always submit them to HumanResources@health.ok.gov. I am also including the statutes and rules about furloughs.

There are additional, long-term changes that will be announced in the next few weeks including instituting mechanisms to reduce the OSDH workforce. The plan for staffing reductions has not been finalized but will be communicated as soon as approved.

In times like these, rumors circulate and sometimes cause undue stress and concern. I encourage you to read through the information that is provided, talk with your managers, and reach out to human resources when you have questions.

I know the furlough and subsequent budget reductions will be difficult, but I am confident we will get through this if we remain focused on our public health priorities. I want to thank each of you for the important work you do and to assure you we are here to provide help and support during this transition.

State of Oklahoma Furlough Statutes / Rules

Title 74 O.S. §840-2.20C

<http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=467637>

Title 74 O.S. §840-2.27C

<http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=440524>

OAC 260:25-15-48

<https://www.ok.gov/opm/documents/MeritRulesTitle260.pdf>