



# Supporting Employees Impacted by Wildfires

Wildfires can be deadly, and many times people are forced to evacuate from their homes when they occur. Employers can also be directly impacted by wildfires, whether they are located in the wildfire path or have employees located in affected areas. Affected employees may find it difficult to balance job demands while trying to rebuild their devastated personal lives. Below are ways you can support your employees during these difficult times.

- **Address the organization immediately.** Senior management should meet with all levels of the organization. Discuss ways to promote counseling services and community resources to help the employees.
- **Designate a contact for assistance.** Designate a person in human resources or leadership as a contact person to whom employees can turn for help and resources.
- **Promote communication among employees.** Allowing employees to discuss their feelings and experiences with co-workers can help during difficult times. Consider providing additional break times and have conference rooms available where employees can meet.
- **Help the community.** Organize a blood drive, clothing drive or fundraiser to help those impacted by the wildfires in your community. Many people not directly affected may feel helpless and unsure of how to help. When people are able to make a difference by contributing to their community, they will feel better about themselves.

Communication tips for managers:

## Do's

- Be aware that employees will be having mixed emotions. These are normal reactions to a critical incident.
- Allow all employees to express any reactions they may have about the fires.
- Answer any questions employees may have to the best of your ability.
- Or, be willing to say nothing. Just being there is often the most supportive thing you can do to help.

## Don'ts

- Avoid statements like, "I know how you feel" or "Everything will be all right." These statements may make some people feel that their concerns are not understood or validated.

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Health does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.