

# Normalizing Lies: Ethics and Protecting Workers from COVID-19

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# Administration Statements About COVID-19

- PPE shortage among hospital workers is “fake news.” “We had very little in our stockpile. Now we’re loaded up. And we also loaded up these hospitals.” – President Trump May 6, 2020
- “Anybody that needs a test, gets a test. We—they’re there. They have the tests. And the tests are beautiful” President Trump March 6, 2020
- “We are literally able to test anyone in the country that would want a test.” VP Pence, June 28, 2020

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# COVID-19 Among Exposed Workers

- CDC reports 94,097 cases and 506 deaths among health care workers\*
- CMS reports (as of June 7) 66,367 confirmed cases, 64,735 suspected cases, and 534 deaths among nursing home workers
- Food and Environment Reporting Network reports 32,630 meatpacking worker cases and 123 deaths

# Administration Statements About COVID-19

“Good afternoon. This is the duty officer from the OSHA office in Fort Lauderdale in regards to your complaint this morning...we are not performing any inspections or any type of enforcement regarding coronavirus.”

-Telephone message reported in Miami Herald July 3, 2020

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- When it comes to workplace safety, we want to provide guidance and clarity and help employers do the right thing. Most are working hard to do so. But we also know that unfortunately, enforcement may be needed in some cases. *We have the tools we need and will use them if necessary.*”

- Secretary of Labor Gene Scalia April 21, 2020

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We do not believe that for every new challenge, there must be a new federal rule. Rather, we believe *we already possess the enforcement authority we need and that our current approach is the best means to protect workers* and give employers guidance and confidence in the steps to be taken to provide a safe workplace and satisfy their obligations.

– Secretary of Labor Gene Scalia June 15, 2020

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OSHA Document: “Enforcement Guidance for Recording Cases of Coronavirus Disease” (April 10, 2020):

This enforcement policy will help employers focus their response efforts on implementing good hygiene practices in their workplaces, and otherwise mitigating COVID-19’s effects, rather than on making difficult work-relatedness decisions in circumstances where there is community transmission.

(Rescinded May 19, 2020)