UUPconnect: Coronavirus

UUP's Informational Newsletter on the COVID-19 Pandemic

This is the latest in a special series of UUPconnect issues dedicated to sharing important coronavirus-related information with UUP members.

COVID-19: The Numbers

More than 304,000 confirmed cases in New York state; more than 167,000 cases in New York City

More than 18,000 deaths in New York state

More than 1 million cases in the U.S.; more than 61,000 deaths

Globally, more than 3.2 million cases and more than 230,000 deaths

From Johns Hopkins University (as of April 30)

Click HERE to see the numbers.

Lunch for Buffalo front-line workers

UUP bought lunch for Western New York doctors, nurses and medical professionals working at two Buffalo hospitals.

UUP statewide Vice President for Professionals Tom Tucker was one of a handful of people who delivered the lunches April 30 to UUP members working at the Erie County Medical Center and Buffalo General Medical Center.

You can view photos by clicking HERE.

More masks deliveries
NYSUT delivered 22,000 surgical masks to our front-line providers at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University and Stony Brook University Hospital. The masks were delivered April 29.

At left, Stony Brook HSC Chapter President Carolyn Kube accepts a delivery of 10,000 surgical masks in front of the hospital.

Front-line workers speak in May Day webcast

Unionized workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic will speak in an online May Day panel discussion sponsored by the Hudson Valley Area Labor Federation.

The panel will include EMTs, nursing home workers, and food-service/grocery-store workers, who will share their stories. The panelists will also answer questions from viewers.

The hour-long online discussion begins at 6 p.m. tonight and can be viewed via Zoom and Facebook live.

Click HERE to register and get a Zoom meeting invitation.

Go to the HVALF’s Facebook page HERE to see the Facebook Live webcast.

Click HERE for more information.

Capital Region May Day caravan

A May Day car caravan is set for 4 p.m. today.

The cars-only procession is organized by the Solidarity Committee of the Capital District and New York. Cars should gather at 3:45 p.m. at Lincoln Park in Albany.

The caravan will route through Albany and end at the Albany High School parking lot, across from Chestnut Street. Speakers will give speeches in the parking lot.

Click HERE for more information.

Tune in to AFT’s unemployment insurance webinar
AFT is holding a webinar this afternoon that will update members on unemployment insurance for non-tenure-track faculty and graduate employees.

The webinar will focus on unemployment insurance eligibility determinations and changes to federal and state rules favoring benefit awards to individuals affected by the pandemic. Unemployment insurance changes are happening quickly, and states are experiencing an unprecedented volume of applications.

The webinar, part of AFT’s Solidarity Academy, is set for 3 p.m.

Click HERE to register.

Click HERE for more information about the AFT Solidarity Academy.

**Tele-town halls**

UUP will hold four tele-town halls in May to allow members to offer their input during a solution-driven discussion on the effect of coronavirus on higher education and economics at the state and national levels.

The tele-town halls will take place on these days:

- 11 a.m., Thursday, May 7
- 3 p.m., Wednesday, May 13
- 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 19
- 11 a.m., Thursday, May 21

Click HERE to register to participate in one of the tele-town halls.

The tele-town halls will include brief presentations on the overall economic perspective of where we are as a state and as a nation, as well as an overview on higher education funding trends in New York state and nationwide. We will then open discussions to members for a solution-driven discussion.

Members should choose just one tele-town hall to participate in, to allow as many members as possible to become involved.

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**New UUP Q&A**
The document, titled “Q&A: Job Security Rights Related to the SUNY Fiscal Crisis,” includes some definitions to help clarify terms associated with potential program and personnel cuts. They are followed by answers to common questions.

Click HERE to download the document.

Tell Congress: Help NY in new coronavirus stimulus package

Our nation is at war against COVID-19 and New York state is the epicenter of this crisis. Our state desperately needs significant resources and it needs them now.

Send an e-letter to your congressional representatives and tell them to act now on a new COVID-19 mitigation package that provides crucial support to New York state.

Click HERE to send the e-letter.

If you’re on Facebook or Twitter, please check out UUP’s social media toolkit, which has sample tweets and Facebook posts to get your friends and family to send an e-letter to Congress.

Click HERE to download the social media toolkit.

Members are also urged to call their congressional representatives. Click HERE to download a script and phone numbers to New York’s congressional delegation.

Workers Memorial Day

Workers Memorial Day was April 28, and the Capital District Area Labor Federation has created a video to remember those Capital Region workers who have died on the job and to honor essential workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic.

Click HERE to view the video.

Also, a Workers Memorial Day message from New York AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento is posted on the NY AFL-CIO website. Click HERE to read the letter.
The deadline to submit 2019 claims for the Health Care Spending Account (HCSA) and Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA) has been extended to May 31.

The extension was made due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Employees enrolled in the accounts can submit claims for health care or dependent care services during 2019.

Also, the several important changes to rules for eligible HCSA expenses were made in the federal CARES Act. The changes are effective retroactive to Jan. 1:

- OTC drugs and medicines are HCSA-eligible for reimbursement without a doctor's prescription.
- Menstrual-care products are now considered qualified medical expenses and are eligible for HCSA reimbursement.
- Employees can use their WageWorks debit card when purchasing these items. They can also submit receipts for reimbursement of these products purchased on or after Jan. 1.

Click HERE for claim forms, instructions for submitting claim forms and more information on rules changes for HCSA expenses.

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Recovered from COVID-19? Donate blood

SUNY's three public teaching hospitals are seeking patients who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate blood to help others who are severely ill with the virus.

SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University in Brooklyn, Stony Brook University Hospital in Stony Brook, and Upstate Medical University in Syracuse are accepting blood donations, which will be used as convalescent plasma for COVID-19 patients.

The blood donation program is part of a national effort being led by the Mayo Clinic. The clinic reports that one 200 ml dose of convalescent plasma has helped severely ill COVID-19 patients improve and eventually recover from the virus.

To donate blood at SUNY Downstate, email Maxine.Easy@Downstate.edu, study coordinator for...
Click **HERE** to donate blood at Stony Brook University Hospital.

To donate blood at Upstate Medical University, call 315-464-9869 or email Trials@upstate.edu to arrange a screening appointment.

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**Help your local food bank**

Food banks across the country are struggling to keep their shelves full as they deal with skyrocketing demand during the coronavirus outbreak.

Tens of millions of working-class Americans who are out of work due to COVID-19 shutdowns and quarantines are struggling to make ends meet and put food on the table. Many have turned to food banks for help.

If you’re in need of food assistance, you can go to FeedingAmerica.org to find a local food bank or food assistance program. Please consider donating to a local food bank if you’re able to do so.

Click **HERE** to go to FeedingAmerica.org.

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**Collective Bargaining Conference webinars**

The National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions has slated a series of webinars focused on higher education, collective bargaining and the impact of COVID-19.

Here’s what’s slated for May:

- Higher Ed Collective Bargaining and Shared Governance in Responding to COVID-19: Noon-1 p.m., Thursday, May 14
  
  Panelists: Theodore H. (Terry) Curry, Michigan State University; William A. Herbert, National Center, Hunter College; and Risa L. Lieberwitz, Cornell University ILR and AAUP

- Low-wage and Gig Work During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Noon-1 p.m. Thursday, May 21
  
  Panelists: Janice Fine, Rutgers; David Lewin, UCLA; Sarah Thomason, University of California, Berkeley;
May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness has resources to provide help and comfort during the coronavirus pandemic.

NAMI’s COVID-19 Resource and Information Guide answers frequently asked questions regarding coronavirus and people affected by mental illness, their caregivers and loved ones.

The guide provides answers to frequently asked questions on topics such as managing anxiety, social isolation and accessing health care and medications.

Click HERE to download the information guide and for more COVID-19 related information.