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 423,400 confirmed cases in New York state

More than 32,800 deaths; more than 73,900 people have recovered

More than 127,500 confirmed cases in Pennsylvania; more than 7,400 deaths

Nearly 5.2 million cases in the U.S.; more than 167,000 deaths; more than 1.7 million people have recovered

Globally, more than 20.9 million cases; more than 760,000 deaths

*From Johns Hopkins University (as of Aug. 14)*

Not on the list? We can fix that

If you’re reading this newsletter and it’s not being emailed to you, that’s a problem.

Fortunately, it’s a problem we can fix.

To receive the *UUPconnect: Coronavirus* newsletter, email UUP Media & Publications Director Mike Lisi at mlisi@uupmail.org. We will add your email to our distribution list.

If your chapter has a coronavirus-related news item or an event—anything from virtual seminars for members to in-person rallies—please share it with us so we can share it statewide. Please email your news items to Lisi at mlisi@uupmail.org.
SUNY hospitals need funding, hazardous duty pay

The three SUNY teaching hospitals and the essential employees working in them desperately need emergency funding if they are to continue providing care for COVID-19 patients, UUP President Fred Kowal told state lawmakers during a daylong Legislative hearing Aug. 12 on how the coronavirus pandemic affected New York's hospitals.

Kowal also urged lawmakers that to support hazard pay for workers on the front lines of the pandemic at SUNY's three public teaching hospitals and health care facilities in Western New York.

“The lack of preparedness points out that there must be proper funding of the SUNY hospitals,” said Kowal. “It was clear we didn’t have the personnel necessary to treat the patients, and the patients we know are coming. Our union went so far as to purchase personal protective equipment for our health-care workers; had we not, more lives would have been lost.”

The Senate and Assembly health committees and several other oversight committees are conducting hearings this week on the state's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Public health advocates detailed horror stories at private and public hospitals during the height of the coronavirus pandemic in the spring, including accounts of doctors and nurses pleading for adequate protective gear as their administrations insisted they had ample supplies, and hospital staff being told not to wear face masks because masks might frighten patients.

“I could tell you horror stories of literally trying to deal with mid-level businesses that were trying to find PPE anywhere in the country; anywhere in the world,” Kowal said. “This was a national catastrophe.”

Read UUP’s coverage of the hearing HERE.

Read Kowal’s testimony HERE.

Kowal talks safe campuses in WAMC commentary
President Kowal’s latest commentary for Albany NPR station WAMC aired Aug. 14. The commentary, titled “Making SUNY Safe,” deals with the importance of safely reopening SUNY campuses for the fall semester.

Click HERE to listen to and read the commentary.

In his commentary, Kowal discusses UUP’s push for mandatory testing for all students, strict social distancing and mask-wearing edicts and expanding the state’s telecommuting agreement with UUP and other unions representing state workers.

He also calls on the governor to order testing for all SUNY students.

“Let us have the information we need to control cases before an outbreak occurs,” Kowal said. “Then we can quarantine those infected, help them heal, and continue to educate the next generation of New Yorkers.”

Kowal to speak at Aug. 19 virtual rally

UUP President Fred Kowal will be a featured speaker at an Aug. 19 virtual rally that will launch NY Renews’ Climate, Jobs and Justice Recovery campaign.

Through the campaign, NY Renews will call on the governor and the state Legislature to act on climate, justice and economic crises in New York and across the country.

The rally starts at noon. Click HERE to register.

At the rally, NY Renews advocates will call for the state to:

· Invest in communities hit hardest by the climate and economic crisis
· Create good-paying green industry jobs with family sustaining wages and labor protections
· Moving the state to 100 percent renewable energy, paid for through penalties on major corporate polluters;
· Making polluters pay for toxins that harm the planet and poison our communities

The event will include a video message from actress Jane Fonda and a question-and-answer session.

UUP is a longtime member of NY Renews, a coalition of more than 100 groups including labor unions,
and social justice.

Universal voting by mail coming to NY

New York voters won’t have to worry about physically getting to the polls to vote in November.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Aug. 14 that he will authorize universal absentee voting in the state. “I will sign that bill, based on COVID,” the governor said in an Aug. 14 Politico NY report. “I think mail-in is the smartest way.”

In the spring, Cuomo signed an executive order that allowed universal voting for the June primary. The Legislature passed a bill in July to extend the order through the end of the pandemic.

In other state news, a federal judge upheld the out-of-state quarantine order issued by Cuomo in July. The order requires travelers from certain states and U.S. territories be quarantined for 14 days when they enter New York.

A woman from Arizona, one of the 31 states on the latest New York quarantine list, filed the lawsuit. But U.S. District Court Judge David Hurd ruled that the governor’s order could stand, because “states around the country are grappling with an unfolding health crisis.”

New York’s quarantine order also includes two U.S. territories. The updated list is: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Mississippi, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

UUP Sunshine State retirees: please vote

Retired UUP members in Florida can plan an important role in electing pro-union candidates in the November election.

The New York State Alliance of Retired Workers, an organization of retired union workers that advocates for economic and social justice for seniors, is working with sister organizations in Florida to motivate retirees to
With Florida expected to be a battleground state in November, it is important for retirees in Florida to register to vote and vote for pro-union candidates.

Click [HERE](#) for a list of Florida candidates endorsed by the Florida AFL-CIO.

Click [HERE](#) for information on voting in Florida.

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**Tell the governor, state legislators: Make SUNY campuses safe for fall**

Please take a moment to send e-letters to Gov. Cuomo and state lawmakers urging them to mandate measures supported by UUP for a safe reopening of SUNY campuses in the fall.

UUP believes resources must be located to provide for baseline and surveillance testing; contact tracing; mask-wearing and social distancing in classrooms and common areas; and allowing faculty and staff to telecommute the safe reopening of SUNY campuses. Those mandates would go far in ensuring that campuses are virus-free when classes resume.

CLICK [HERE](#) to send an e-letter to Gov. Cuomo.

CLICK [HERE](#) to send an e-letter to your state elected officials.

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**Urgent update: Congress needs to act**

UUP is asking its members to continue to press their congressional lawmakers for passage of the HEROES Act, a coronavirus relief bill, and their state lawmakers for an ultra-millionaires' tax and a billionaires' tax, so that New York state can address a budget deficit approaching $20 billion, and SUNY can get the funding it so desperately needs.

To take action, go to UUP's website and click on the links in the Take Action box on the right side of the page. Click [HERE](#) to go to the UUP website.

This is not only a matter of aid to public higher education; it's a matter of racial justice. It's already established that the coronavirus has hit low-income communities of color especially hard in the United States. So, it's unfortunately no surprise that the
That’s because there are sharp disparities in the unemployment benefits among states, and many of those disparities most deeply affect Black workers, who disproportionately live in states with the lowest unemployment benefits and the highest barriers to qualify for them, as reported in this *New York Times* story.

In April, the federal government started providing most workers with an additional $600 a week in unemployment benefits, in addition to their state benefits. That additional payment was a lifeline for millions of Americans, and especially so for Black workers who lost their job because of the pandemic.

The House passed the HEROES Act May 15, but the bill has languished in the Senate. The two sides tried again this week to work out a deal, to no avail.

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**Virtual student loan clinics**

Do you need help managing your student loan debt? UUP can help.

The union is holding a series of virtual Student Debt Clinics for UUP members in August. At the clinics, members can learn about free federal programs that can help reduce their monthly loan payments and eventually lead to student loan forgiveness.

It’s not too late to register for the clinics; registrations will be accepted the day of the events. The clinics will be held on these dates:

- Aug. 19: Noon to 1:30 p.m.
- Aug. 26: Noon to 1:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Click [HERE](#) to sign up for the clinics.

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**UUP leadership training webinar**

UUP’s Membership Committee invites members to take part in an Aug. 18 leadership training webinar.

The one-hour seminar, titled “Organizing for Power - Identifying Leaders,” is set to start at noon. It is a discussion-based workshop for chapter leaders seeking to build union power by expanding the number of member-organizing leaders in their union.
The goal of the training is to equip union leaders with information and tools to identify, recruit, and elevate leaders. Participants will consider the theory and practice of leadership as well as outline specific steps they may take to identify, activate, and engage new leaders.

Click HERE to register. Contact UUP Organizer Chris Sielaff at csielaff@uupmail.org.

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**Virtual NEOs series**

UUP is hosting “UUP Benefits 101,” a series of new employee orientation webinars focusing on benefits and ways new members can maximize them.

The webinars, which run through Aug. 26, will also cover the importance of becoming a UUP member. Director of Member Benefits and Services Doreen Bango will lead the webinars.

New SUNY employees who started March 13 or later can attend the webinars. CLICK HERE to RSVP for the webinars; login information will be sent out the week of the event.

The webinar schedule is below:

- Aug. 24: 3:30 p.m. and 6 p.m.
- Aug. 26: Noon and 6 p.m.

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**UUP webinar series on pandemic work conditions continues**

UUP will host its final two webinars next week in a recent series of question-and-answer sessions for members employed in a range of academic and professional work at SUNY.

The session on Monday, Aug. 17, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., will cover members working in financial aid, student accounts, admissions and registrar offices.

The webinar on Tuesday, Aug. 18, from 2:30 to 4 p.m., will be a second session for contingent employees.

UUP has hosted the webinar series to keep members informed on its discussions with SUNY and the state on work conditions during the pandemic, and to allow members to ask questions. UUP President Fred Kowal and other statewide officers have led the discussions.
O’Bryan-Losee at jobryan@uupmail.org. Members are also invited to submit specific questions and suggestions prior to the event, and they can email those questions to O’Bryan-Losee.

Pre-retirement webinars

UUP’s Membership Committee will hold pre-retirement webinars for all UUP members on Aug. 17 and Aug. 18.

The 90-minute seminars will start at 2 p.m. UUP Retiree Member Services Coordinator Walter Apple will lead the webinars.

Click HERE for instructions to access the webinars.

AFT launches “Road to Reopening Schools” webinars

AFT’s Health and Safety Labor/Management’s “Road to Reopening Schools” webinar series kicked off this week with a virtual seminar on cleaning and disinfecting in schools during the pandemic.

That 65-minute webinar, titled “Cleaning and Disinfecting in Schools During a Pandemic,” is available on demand.

Click HERE to register to view the webinar.

The next webinar, “Physical Distancing,” will be held Aug. 19. Other sessions include “Ventilation and Building Systems” Aug. 26 and Hand Hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment Sept. 2.

Webinar: Economic security during the pandemic

The AFL-CIO is holding a webinar series on the union economy.

The webinar, titled “Buy Union. Build Power,” kicks off Aug. 18 with a webinar on personal and commercial finances. Representatives from Union Plus, American Income Life and Bank of Labor will talk about ways to keep families and unions economically stable during this tumultuous time.
Two webinars are slated, at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 18; and at 6 p.m. Thursday Aug. 20.

Click [HERE](#) to register for the Aug. 18 webinar.

Click [HERE](#) to register for the Aug. 20 webinar.

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**Earn Teaching and Learning Certificate online**

Courses are available online to earn the Teaching and Learning Certificate for New Faculty Program.

The program, designed and delivered by SUNY faculty developers and faculty, is intended to assist new faculty, graduate assistants, adjuncts, instructional designers and librarians. The program teaches basic skills and knowledge needed for higher education instruction.

Registration is open for the first course, “Learning Theories and Effective Teaching Practices,” which starts Aug. 25. You can also register for the other two courses — “Evaluation & Assessment” and “Essential Communication Skills for Teaching.”

You can register for the courses [HERE](#).

The courses are not sequential so you can take only one course or spread them out through 2021. All courses take place online in Blackboard; you can log in any time to take them. Each course lasts six weeks and requires about 2 to 4 hours per week to complete.

A discount is available if you register for all the courses at the same time. SUNY CPD Membership Points can be used to pay for this program.

Contact Chris Price at [chris.price@suny.edu](mailto:chris.price@suny.edu) with questions.

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**Campus reopening plans**

College life will be different for SUNY students when campuses open for fall classes.

SUNY has created a web page with a comprehensive list of reopening plans for SUNY state-operated campuses. You can view it [HERE](#).

UUP issued its reopening guidelines for campuses June 2. UUP’s guidelines are far more stringent; they call for mandatory and recurring COVID-19 testing for all and contract tracing and isolation. Read them [HERE](#).
UUP In Memoriam webpage

UUP remembers the active and retired members of our union family that we’ve lost to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you know of a UUP member who has died due to COVID-19, please click the link below to enter their information on UUP's In Memoriam webpage.

CLICK HERE to fill out the In Memoriam form.

Enter the decedent’s name (first name, middle initial and last name), select their campus from a pull-down list, and include your email. You may also leave a short personal note about the deceased.

We will never forget our colleagues who were lost to COVID-19.