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COVID-19: The Numbers

428,767 confirmed cases in New York state
32,932 deaths; 74,850 people have recovered

127,174 confirmed cases in Massachusetts; 9,008 deaths
5,889,652 cases in the U.S.; 181,186 deaths; 2,101,326 people have recovered

Globally, more than 24.5 million cases; more than 833,000 deaths

*From Johns Hopkins University (as of Aug. 28)*

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.
Campuses heed UUP’s call to commit to recurring COVID testing

On June 1, UUP called out for the need to test students and staff for coronavirus before campuses reopen and classes resume in the fall.

That call continued through the summer, with the union repeating the need for mandatory, recurring testing on campus and explaining why the rules—along with a comprehensive contact tracing plan and mask-wearing and social distancing mandates—are necessary to keep students, faculty, staff and people in communities that host SUNY campuses safe.

UUP’s message has been heard—and heeded.

This week, six SUNY campuses—Brockport, Cobleskill, Geneseo, Oneonta, Plattsburgh and UAlbany—announced that they will use pool testing to detect COVID-19 on campus. SUNY Alfred, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and SUNY Morrisville are also part of the testing program.

On Aug. 27, SUNY New Paltz announced a mandatory testing policy for all students on campus starting Aug. 31. That same day, Gov. Cuomo announced new guidance for campus infection rates and how campuses should handle COVID-19 outbreaks.

Colleges that log 100 COVID-19 cases or the number of cases equals 5 percent or more of their population must go to remote learning for two weeks; the situation will be reassessed after two weeks, according to a SUNY press release.

UUP President Fred Kowal, in an Aug. 27 email to members, said that he expects more campuses to require recurring COVID-19 testing, adding that new SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras has thanked UUP for its unrelenting push for safely reopening campuses.

“Our efforts at the statewide level—as well as at chapters across SUNY—are bearing fruit,” Kowal said. “These are difficult times, but our efforts are paying off. At the same time, the challenges we face are enormous. Thanks to all of you for all that you are doing for our union, our students and our communities.”

Read more HERE.
UUP on the air

UUP President Fred Kowal talks about new state guidance for COVID-19 infection rates on SUNY campuses and how campuses should handle outbreaks on two statewide talk shows this weekend.

Kowal sat for an interview this morning on “Capitol Pressroom,” the statewide news/political talk show that originates in Albany. The show, produced by Syracuse NPR station WCNY, aired this morning. You can listen on demand HERE.

This weekend, he’ll talk on the same topics on television. Kowal appears on “Empire State Weekly,” a news/political talk show that tapes in Albany and airs across Upstate New York.

The show airs at these times in these cities:

- WTEN, Albany: 11 a.m. Sunday
- WXXA, Albany: 11 p.m. Sunday
- WIVB, Buffalo: 5:30 a.m. Sunday
- WIVG, Binghamton: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
- WETM, Elmira: 7 a.m. Sunday
- WFFF, Plattsburgh: 11 p.m. Sunday
- WROC, Rochester: 5:30 a.m. Sunday
- WSYR, Syracuse: 6 a.m. Saturday
- WPNY, Utica: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
- WWTI, Watertown: 11 a.m. Sunday

Kowal issues strong statement on Jacob Blake shooting

UUP President Fred Kowal called for the end of systemic racism in the U.S. in an Aug. 26 press statement about Jacob Blake, a Black man shot by police in front of his three children Aug. 23 in Kenosha, Wis.

“When will this soul-numbing repetition end?,” Kowal said in the statement “The violence of centuries continues without any sign of abating. The time for half-measures and limited reform has long passed.

“The time is now to do all we can to eradicate the systemic racism that’s rife in law enforcement and has been pervasive in America for 400 years,” he continued. “This is America. Our claim to believe that everyone has a right to a life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness rings hollow, more than ever.”

Read the full statement HERE.
UUP sets next webinar series on pandemic work conditions

UUP’s ongoing series of question-and-answer sessions for members employed in a range of academic and professional work at SUNY continues Sept. 3.

The session, to be held from 9 to 10:30 a.m., will deal with issues faced by members who work in SUNY museums and galleries.

UUP is hosting the webinars 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.

The webinars are open to UUP members. To join the conversation, send a registration request to UUP Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O’Bryan-Losee at jobryan@uupmail.org. Members may submit specific questions and suggestions prior to the event; email them to O’Bryan-Losee.

Questions about voting this year? Read this.

One thing that most everyone agrees on is that the Nov. 3 election will be one of most important in America’s history.

But things are complicated this year, in large part due to the coronavirus pandemic. In New York, voters have two options: voting in person and voting with an absentee ballot.

The first step is the same for people who will vote in person or by absentee ballot: Make sure you’re registered to vote. You can do that HERE. If you’re not registered, you have until Oct. 9 to do so. Go HERE to find information on how to register.

Then, put on your face mask, go to your polling place on Nov. 3 and vote.

Things are a little trickier if you’re going to vote with an absentee ballot. On Aug. 20, the governor signed a law allowing all voters to immediately request absentee ballots; a second law allows ballots to be postmarked the day of the election.

You can apply for an absentee ballot online, by email, by fax or by mail. The state is still working on setting up an online portal for ballot requests; it is coming soon,
If you don’t want to wait, you can download an absentee ballot application HERE and mail, email or fax it in. Make sure to mark the box that says “temporary illness” if you are requesting the ballot because of coronavirus concerns.

The deadline to apply online or by mail for an absentee ballot is Oct. 27. You can apply for a ballot in person up until Nov. 2. Ballots will start going out in the mail in September.

Once you get your ballot, make sure that you vote and sign it before mailing it in. Detailed information on how to submit an absentee ballot can be found HERE.

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**New York issues COVID-19 infection rates guidance for higher ed**

SUNY campuses will move to remote learning for two weeks if they reach 100 confirmed COVID-19 cases or if the number of cases is five percent or more if their population under new guidelines released by the state.

Students will remain on campus to take classes; the local health department will reassess the situation after two weeks, according to an Aug. 27 press release from Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

"We should anticipate clusters and that's what we're seeing," the governor said. "Be prepared for it, get ahead of it."

UUP President Fred Kowal said he welcomed the restrictions, which would help mitigate spread of coronavirus on campus and in communities that host SUNY campuses. UUP has pressed for safety mandates, including this measure, on campuses since June 1.

“We welcome this, we think this is an excellent step forward," Kowal said during an Aug. 28 interview on “Capitol Pressroom,” a statewide news/talk radio show that airs on NPR station WCNY.

The new state guidance comes as classes restart at SUNY campuses and campuses are starting to see cases of COVID-19 crop up. SUNY campuses in Albany, Alfred, Binghamton, Brockport, Buffalo, Cortland, Fredonia, Geneseo, Maritime, Oswego, Oneonta, and Plattsburgh have reported coronavirus cases, according to news reports and The New York Times' tracking page for coronavirus at colleges nationwide.
The number of cases on SUNY cases, which is just over 100 for all campuses combined, pales in comparison to big coronavirus outbreaks at colleges and universities such as the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of North Carolina have 972 cases and 835 cases respectively as of Aug. 27.

Local health departments or the State Department of Health may order colleges and universities to suspend on-campus activities if they find the campus is unable to control an outbreak—even if cases don’t reach levels set in the new state guidelines.

Read the state press release HERE.

Meanwhile, Cuomo said he will not lift the 14-day quarantine order required for travelers from certain states and U.S. territories when they enter New York—despite the Centers for Disease Control’s move last week to drop its recommendation for two-week quarantines for travelers returning from overseas or from states with high numbers of coronavirus cases.

At an Aug. 26 press conference, Cuomo called the CDC’s decision “political propaganda” and “wholly indefensible on its face,” charging that it was prompted by political pressure from the Trump administration.

Cuomo also removed five states—Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, Maryland and Montana—from New York’s out-of-state quarantine order list.

These states and territories remain on the list: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Minnesota, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

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 your state elected officials.

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 economic crash caused by the pandemic is marked by a racial divide, as well.

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.

Register now for Sept. 9 online accessibility, learning webinar

The Northeast ADA Center will hold a Sept. 9 seminar on virtual learning.
The hour-long forum, titled "Back to School and Virtual Accessibility," is set for noon. It is free; registration is required.

Led by Joe Zesski, Northeast ADA program manager, the webinar will provide a basic overview of the legal need for online accessibility in the education setting, review key elements in accessible online learning, and discuss how schools and educators can address planning for an accessible online classroom.

Click HERE to register.

Register now for Binghamton University health care symposium

The coronavirus, disaster management and hospitals and public health are topics set to be discussed at the Binghamton Symposium on Healthcare Management and Policy.

The 16th annual session, set for Sept. 18, will be a virtual forum featuring seven panel discussions and a keynote speech by James R. Tallon, Jr., a former state Assembly member, chairman of the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured and president of the United Hospital Fund of New York.

Panel sessions at the symposium are:

- Hospital & Health Care Insurance
- Health Insurance Policy, Politics, and Reform
- Topic B: Covid-19: Disaster Management & Public Policy
- New Frontiers of Disaster Management: Covid-19
- Covid-19: Hospitals & Public Health
- Covid-19 and Community Leaders
- Covid-19 and Local Community

The symposium will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is free to attend and open to all; registration is required by Aug. 31.

Click HERE to register.

Webinar: Economic security during the pandemic

The AFL-CIO’s “Buy Union. Build Power” webinar series on the union economy continues with an online forum on capital markets.
Representatives from Union Insurance Group, Segal and BNY Mellon will discuss ways to keep us, our families and our unions economically stable during this time of uncertainty for capital markets.

Two hour-long sessions will be held at 10 a.m. Sept. 1 and 6 p.m. Sept. 3.

Click HERE to register for the Sept. 1 webinar.

Click HERE to register for the Sept. 3 webinar.

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.