

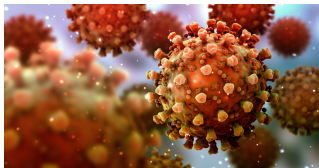
This is the latest in a special series of UUPconnect issues dedicated to sharing important coronavirus-related information with UUP members. If you have questions or comments about items in this newsletter, please email them to UUPConnect@uupmail.org.



Happy holidays!

Please stay safe and enjoy the holiday season.

This is the last UUPConnect: Coronavirus newsletter for 2020. Our next issue will be issued on Friday, Jan. 8, 2021.



COVID-19: The Numbers

These are cumulative numbers collected since the start of the pandemic. The numbers in parentheses are increases since Dec. 11:

New York

828,166 confirmed cases in New York state (up 84,924 cases)

36,177 35,266 total deaths (increase of 911 deaths)

U.S.

17,370,311 cases in the U.S. (up 1,737,975 cases)

312,524 deaths (increase of 20,142 deaths)

Globally, more than 75.4 million cases; 1.67 million deaths

From **Johns Hopkins University** as of Dec. 18



A COVID-19-detecting saliva test developed by a UUP member has been ranked No. 1 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The test, ranked sixth worldwide in detecting the virus, was developed at Upstate Medical University by Upstate Chapter member Dr. Frank Middleton, the lead researcher on the project.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has credited the test for helping SUNY campuses pinpoint cases at the earliest stages of the virus.

"New York's medical experts are second to none and from the very beginning of this pandemic, we have relied on their vast knowledge and expertise to inform our response," Cuomo said. "This crucial development and expertise have played a critical role in ensuring SUNY students were tested efficiently and, if positive, isolated and on a path to recovery sooner."

Click [HERE](#) to read more about the test.



Important benefits information

A holiday message to members from UUP Director of Member Benefits/ Fund Administrator Doreen Bango:

As we adjust to these especially difficult times during the holidays, I just wanted to assure you that the UUP Benefit Trust Fund and Member Services Trust are working hard for our UUP-represented employees.

You can call, or direct UUP-represented employees to call, the Benefit Trust Fund at 800-887-3863 (Press 1 for active members) or email us at benefits@uupmail.org.

UUP's Benefits Department staff is listed below:

- Karen Dombrowski – Supervisor
- Lisa McNeil – Administrative assistant
- Mia Bango – BTF representative
- Amber Barber – BTF representative
- Mary Jane Barber – BTF representative
- Regina Kane – BTF representative
- Kimberly Tiberio – BTF representative

We also have representatives who work directly with UUP retirees. You can call, or direct retired members to call, Retiree Member Services at 800-887-3863 (Press 2 for retired members) or email us at benefits@uupmail.org.

- Walter Apple – Retiree Member Services coordinator
- Gretchen Sarnowicz – Retiree Member Services assistant
- Dakota Roulhac – Retiree Member Services assistant

Happy holidays and please stay safe.



A deadly and tragic trend in COVID hospitalizations

The numbers of COVID hospitalizations in New York are almost unbelievable, but they are true, and they cry out for New Yorkers to do as state officials are pleading: Stay in, stay home, stay away from social gatherings. Wear a mask everywhere except in your own home.

For UUP members, it's personal, and they understand the urgency. Many of their colleagues are at risk of contracting COVID-19, simply because their job demands that they put themselves in harm's way for students and patients.

So, if someone you know doesn't understand how one person can make a difference for better or worse in this pandemic, depending on whether they choose to be careful or careless, try using some of the numbers from this Wall Street Journal story and see if that convinces them.

Here's a sampling: More than five percent of the state's population is testing positive for the virus this week. More than 6,000 people were in hospitals for COVID-19 as of Thursday. This is the worst it's been since May.

If you or someone you love needs a surgery that would relieve pain but is not a matter of life or death – say, orthopedic surgery on a knee or shoulder – chances are it's going to be a lot more difficult to get that operation in several parts of the state now, as elective surgery has been cancelled at many hospitals.

Read more about the situation in New York's hospitals [HERE](#).



Tricky time to travel

New York's travel rules for residents and visitors entering the state are still in effect.

allowed for essential workers, and for travelers from states contiguous to New York, but other travelers entering the state—including those from U.S. territories and any country the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention deems a high-risk location—must meet certain criteria to be exempted from a 14-day quarantine.

To read more about the requirements, and to ask questions about the guidelines, click [HERE](#).

Connecticut and New Jersey do not require travelers from New York to quarantine. Massachusetts considers New York a high-risk state, which means that travelers to the commonwealth must follow its quarantine requirements.

Read more about the Massachusetts guidelines [HERE](#).

Vermont also requires anyone traveling to the state to quarantine. Read more about Vermont's policy [HERE](#).



Another coronavirus vaccine on the way

An advisory panel of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has recommended that a coronavirus vaccine produced by Moderna Inc. receive approval for use in the United States.

The FDA was expected to grant approval for emergency use Dec. 18.

Distribution of the vaccine could start within 24 hours. It follows the vaccine produced by Pfizer, which is already in use in the U.S.

The development and distribution of vaccines against the coronavirus represent the largest public-health effort in the history of the United States.

Read more about the Moderna vaccine [HERE](#).

EMPIRE ★ STATE
WEEKLY

Kowal on Empire State Weekly

The safety of students, faculty, staff on SUNY campuses is paramount for UUP—now more than ever as campuses prepare to resume in-person classes for the Spring semester.

UUP President Fred Kowal takes to the airwaves Dec. 26 and Dec. 27 to talk about safety guidelines that UUP believes must be put in place to ensure that campuses—

President Kowal will appear on "Empire State Weekly," a statewide news and public affairs television program that airs across Upstate New York. Tim Lake, anchor at WTEN, Channel 10 in Albany, hosts the show.

During his interview, President Kowal will discuss **"United University Professions - Guidelines for Spring 2021: Keeping Our Campuses Safe During the COVID-19 Pandemic,"** a Dec. 1 report detailing UUP's recommendations to keep campuses safe during the pandemic.

You can read UUP's press release about the study [HERE](#).

"Empire State Weekly" airs in these areas at the dates and times below:

Albany/Capital Region: 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, News10 ABC (WTEN-TV); 11 p.m. Sunday, FOX 23 (WXXA-TV).

- Binghamton: 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, NewsChannel 34 (WIVT-TV)
- Buffalo: 5:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, News 4 (WIVB-TV)
- Elmira: 7 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, WETM 18 (WETM-TV)
- Plattsburgh: 11 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, FOX Local 44 (WFFF-TV)
- Rochester: 5:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, News 8 (WROC-TV)
- Syracuse: 6 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 26, NewsChannel 9 (WSYR-TV)
- Utica: 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, MY TV WPNY (WPNY-TV)
- Watertown: 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 27, WWTI ABC 50 (WWTI-TV)



A legislative agenda for a very challenging year

UUP is crafting its legislative agenda, and members are being given a chance to speak directly to union leaders on their ideas for that agenda.

The union held the first of two virtual Town Halls Dec. 17; the second one will be Dec. 21. Members can register [HERE](#).

To submit ideas for the legislative agenda, go [HERE](#).

unique time came for a bold response. In his opening remarks to members at the Dec. 17 town hall, he encouraged members to think big and offer creative ideas on topics such as funding for SUNY, protections for adjunct faculty, and environmental and social justice issues, to name a few.

UUP plans to also develop a federal legislative agenda this year, for the first time.

"I really want the members to be heard," Kowal said. "It's going to be a tough session, there's no doubt about it. The budget is going to be incredibly tight." Even so, he added, "I believe right now, more than ever before, we need to go big or go home. It's time for us to take the lead."

Read UUP's coverage of the first Town Hall [HERE](#).



Free subscription of In These Times for union members

In These Times, a politically progressive monthly magazine, is offering free year-long subscriptions.

But you've got to act fast; the offer ends tonight.

A limited number of free subscriptions of the print magazine is made available to union members each year as part of the publisher's commitment to a strong, engaged and informed labor movement. The publisher has graciously agreed to extend this offer to AFT members.

Since 1976, In These Times has covered movements for social and economic justice, as well as elections, culture and more. It's also one of the few magazines that's dedicated to reporting on the labor movement.

Click [HERE](#) to get your free subscription of In These Times.



UUP face masks for sale

Now you can promote your union and help fund UUP's annual college scholarships or VOTE-COPE at the same time.

The union is selling stylish UUP face masks and filters; proceeds will go to UUP's College Scholarship Fund or VOTE-COPE. Members purchasing masks can decide which effort they wish to support.

and are machine washable. The masks are also washable.

Dozens of UUP members have purchased masks and their donations have given a boost to the union's Scholarship Fund and VOTE-COPE. So far, more than \$1,000 in mask sales proceeds have gone to the Scholarship Fund; VOTE-COPE has received over \$700.

Members have their choice between buying a mask and five filters or just the filters. Masks and filters are selling for \$20; the filters are \$10.

Click [HERE](#) to order online.

Click [HERE](#) to order by mail and pay by check.



UUP Journalism Contest winners announced

Congratulations to all the winners of the UUP 2020 Journalism Contest.

This year, the winner of the Phillip H. Smith "Best of the Best" Award for Overall Excellence is the Cortland Chapter. The Cortland Chapter also won 6 other awards, including First awards for General Excellence and Best Editorial or Column.

The Oneonta, Stony Brook, Farmingdale and Cobleskill chapters also won First awards for their communications efforts. The Fredonia Chapter and UUP Retirees were also award winners.

Click [HERE](#) to see a complete list of winners.



UUP wins international communications honors

UUP's Media & Publications Department won 13 awards in the 2020 ILCA Labor Media Awards Contest. The awards were announced Dec. 17.

ILCA is the International Labor Communications Association, the professional organization of labor communicators in North America.

ILCA's membership is open to national, regional, and local union publications and to media productions affiliated with the AFL-CIO, Change to Win, and the Canadian Labour Congress. ILCA's members produce publications with a total circulation in the tens of millions.

Click [HERE](#) for a list of ILCA awards won by UUP.



eLearning is easy with Empire KnowledgeBank

EKB eLearning offers thousands of courses and videos to assist employees develop current skills and learn new skills for professional development and advancement.

Empire KnowledgeBank, a UUP-negotiated benefit, also offers courses to help members deal with stress, change, and staying balanced in an ever-changing world.

UUP-represented employees can access thousands of eLearning courses, eBooks and short course videos for opportunities to enhance their professional and career development, for certification preparation and continuing education.

Course offerings include "Bouncing Back with Perseverance and Resilience," "Take a Deep Breath and Manage Your Stress," "Optimizing Your Work-Life Balance," and "Staying Balanced in a Shifting World."

Click [HERE](#) to apply for a FREE EKB license and to access guidelines.



Give union-made gifts for the holidays

From clothes and games to sporting equipment and even Cadillacs, it's not too late to find a holiday gift that's union-made and made in America.

The AFL-CIO has compiled a list of unionized companies that you can shop at and be assured that you'll be buying gifts that carry a union label and were made here in the good old USA.

Those companies employ workers who are represented by unions such as **UNITE HERE**, the **Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers**, and the **United Farm Workers**.

Click [HERE](#) to download the list.



Pre-retirement workshops set

UUP is holding a series of virtual pre-retirement workshops.

The two-part webinars will cover health care and Medicare, followed by union benefits, such as dental

Jan. 26, 2021: Health care and Medicare, noon

Jan. 28, 2021: Union benefits, noon

Click [HERE](#) to sign up.

GET ON THE LIST!

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Not on the list? We can fix that

If you're reading this newsletter and it's not being emailed to you, please let us know.

We will fix that problem, toot sweet.

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, please share it with us so we can share it statewide. Please email your news items to Lisi at mlisi@uupmail.org.

You can email questions and concerns about this newsletter to UUPConnect@uupmail.org.

Follow Us @UUPinfo

