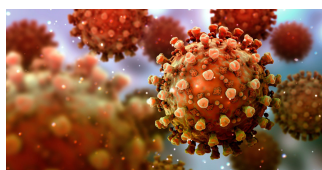


This is the latest in a special series of UUPconnect issues dedicated to sharing important coronavirus-related information with UUP members. If you have questions or comments about items in this newsletter, please email them to UUPConnect@uupmail.org.



COVID-19: The Numbers

These are cumulative numbers collected since the start of the pandemic. The numbers in parentheses are increases since Jan. 8, 2021:

New York

1,200,705 confirmed cases in New York state (up 118,820 cases)

40,510 total deaths (increase of 1,392 deaths)

U.S.

23,395,418 cases in the U.S. (up 1,809,788 cases)

390,195 deaths (increase of 24,836 deaths)

Globally, more than 93.5 million cases; 2 million deaths

From [Johns Hopkins University](#) as of Jan. 15



COVID-19: Vaccines

This is a running total of the number of people in the United States who have received the coronavirus vaccine.

People vaccinated with first dose: 11,148,991

Total doses distributed: 30,628,175

From [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) as of Jan. 14



UUP: Priority vaccinations for all SUNY on-campus employees a must

UUP President Fred Kowal called for all on-campus SUNY employees to be vaccinated as part of the state's expanded Phase 1B vaccination plan in a strongly-worded Jan. 15 press release.

Read the release [HERE](#).

In the release, Kowal said that SUNY employees working on campus should receive priority status for vaccinations as part of Phase 1B, which provides vaccine eligibility to police officers, firefighters, K-12 teachers, grocery store workers and court officers, among others.

SUNY instructors who teach students in-person on campus are included in Phase 1B. But professionals on campus who work directly with students—including employees who work in residence halls, libraries and IT—are not eligible for vaccinations under Phase 1B.

"These crucial employees have not been included in the 1B classification – and that means they will not be eligible for vaccinations as we begin the spring semester," Kowal said. "This is unacceptable, especially when the number of professionals is a far smaller pool than the hundreds of thousands of our K-12 colleagues being vaccinated as part of 1B – which we welcome and applaud.

"All of our members working on campus need to be vaccinated," he continued. "They are committed to keeping our students, our campuses and our communities healthy and safe during this pandemic."

UUP is working closely with SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras to make all SUNY employees working on campus eligible for the vaccine under Phase 1B.



SUNY vaccine updates – UUP webpage

UUP has created a webpage with the latest updates about which SUNY employees are eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccination under the state's Phase 1B vaccination plan.

The page also provides information and links about who is eligible for a vaccination and how to sign up for one.

Click [HERE](#) to view the webpage.



SUNY hosts mass vaccination sites, but long waits continue

Numerous SUNY campuses are among the nearly two dozen mass vaccination sites that New York is opening to administer the coronavirus vaccine.

But for millions of New Yorkers, the problem will not be finding a vaccination site near their home; it will be booking an appointment that will allow them to get the vaccine.

Some sites are already booked up for weeks. The state's COVID-19 hotline (833-697-4829) that many vaccination sites are directing people to for booking an appointment is playing a recorded message stating that no one is available to answer because of extremely high call volume.

State health officials say the backlog is expected to ease in coming weeks as the Biden administration increases the supply of vaccine and better coordinates the federal distribution.

As of Jan. 15, vaccination sites have either already opened or are opening in the next few days at:

- SUNY Albany in the Northwest Resident Student Parking Lot/Northwest Gold Parking Lot, on the SUNY Albany Uptown Campus
- SUNY Stony Brook University Innovation and Discovery Center
- SUNY Binghamton property in Johnson City
- SUNY Potsdam's Maxcy Hall Field House
- The University at Buffalo South Campus in Harriman Hall
- SUNY Cortland
- SUNY Polytechnic Institute's (Utica) Wildcat Field House

The New York State Department of Health COVID-19 website, with information on eligibility and booking appointments, is [HERE](#).

A list of sites providing the vaccine is [HERE](#); users will be sent to a second link that determines if they are eligible to get the vaccine.

In New York City, go [HERE](#) to find vaccination sites.

Many vaccination sites are booking their own appointments. Some regions have their own hotlines and procedures for booking appointments; check your county health department website to find out how to

Click [HERE](#) for a state Health Department webpage with links to county health departments websites.

New York is providing vaccinations based on CDC guidelines. The priority recipients for the vaccine according to those guidelines are people working in numerous categories of jobs that place them at high risk for exposure to the coronavirus, and residents age 65 or older.

But with the state receiving only about 300,000 doses of vaccine each week, and an estimated seven million New Yorkers falling into the category of age 65 or older alone, demand has far outstripped supply.



UUP sends PPE to Upstate

At the peak of the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, UUP secured and delivered thousands of isolation gowns, face masks and other personal protective gear to safeguard heroic UUP members on the front lines of the pandemic at SUNY's public hospitals and health sciences centers.

Now, as the second wave of coronavirus rages across the state, UUP has again taken action to protect its members, this time at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. The union purchased and sent 25,000 isolation gowns to Upstate UUP members Jan. 8.

"The safety of our members, and especially those on the front lines of the pandemic, is paramount," UUP President Fred Kowal said. "We are happy to send this life-saving gear to our Upstate members, who are dealing with significant increases of COVID-19 patients in the Central New York area. We will always be there for them, and for all of our members."

SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras expressed his strong support for UUP in a Jan. 8 press statement, which he echoed on social media.

"As frontline personnel across our SUNY hospitals continue their historic work against COVID, I want to offer my sincere appreciation to UUP for donating 25,000 isolation gowns to Upstate Medical University Hospital," he said. "The battle against COVID isn't done and I appreciate our (colleagues) in labor for their help. We're in this together."

Read UUP's story [HERE](#).



Kowal talks COVID vaccines on Buffalo's Channel 7

UUP President Fred Kowal appeared on WKBW-TV, Channel 7, in Buffalo Jan. 12 to talk about the absolute need for all SUNY employees working on campus to be included under the state's expanded vaccination plan.

"We are adamant that (professionals) need to be included and the chancellor agrees with that," Kowal told Channel 7 reporter Katie Morse. "Now, the idea is how do we get the state to agree to that, while also addressing the reality that there aren't enough vaccines to go around because the federal government is not releasing a sufficient supply."

Kowal said he's hopeful that a decision that adds professionals to the Phase 1B vaccination list should come soon.

View video of the interview [HERE](#).



Downstate frontline workers honored

Downstate Chapter members on the front lines of the pandemic response at Brooklyn's SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University were honored for their heroic efforts Jan. 14 by Metro New York Health Care for All.

Metro New York, a New York City-based labor and community organization that fights for health care justice, honored the Downstate Chapter and other unions that represent front-line health care workers in the state with its Trade Union Leadership for Health Care Justice award.

The awards were presented during the organization's 2020 Health Care Justice Leadership Annual Gala. The event was held virtually.

Downstate Chapter President Rowena Blackman-Stroud accepted the award for Downstate.

"At the height of the first wave of the pandemic last spring, our members found themselves at the epicenter of the nation's COVID-19 outbreak," she said. "They worked tirelessly, even as Gov. Cuomo designated SUNY Downstate as a COVID-19 hospital. Our members showed extreme bravery in the face of this virus."

Other unions that were honored include 1199 SEIU, the New York State Nurses Association, and several District Council 37 locals.



Oneonta to hold candlelight vigil for COVID victims

SUNY Oneonta will join communities across the nation Jan. 19 to remember the victims of COVID-19 by lighting candles in their honor on campus.

The UUP Oneonta Chapter and the Oneonta administration invite campus members to honor any loved ones or friends who have died from COVID-19 with a luminary in their memory.

The 24-hour vigil will begin 12:01 a.m. Jan. 19. Participants are asked to register by noon Jan. 18. Click [HERE](#) to register.

Because of COVID-19 safety precautions, the college will not hold an in-person ceremony or gathering. Photos of the vigil will be shared with the campus community.



Telecommuting into the spring

UUP's telecommuting agreement with SUNY has been extended through April 2.

UUP first negotiated the telecommuting agreement last spring, following the shutdown of SUNY campuses and the abrupt conversion to distance learning.

The unprecedented situation of operating the SUNY system during a pandemic has meant that telecommuting has encountered occasional hitches, mostly involving varying interpretations of the agreement among different campuses. Members have apprised UUP chapter and statewide leaders of such issues, and the union has addressed them as they have been raised.

"We will continue to advocate for its liberal interpretation so as to protect the health and safety of our campus communities during this most dangerous period of the COVID pandemic," Kowal told members in a recent message about the latest extension.



Binghamton members lead student-faculty teams recognized for pandemic research

Two UUP members are among three professors at Binghamton University whose student-faculty research teams have just received SUNY grants for their work on projects related to COVID-19.

Membership Program. Twelve research teams of SUNY students and faculty on seven SUNY campuses received up to \$10,000 each in seed funding to do further research on their proposals.

UUP members are lead researchers on two of the three recipient projects at Binghamton. They are:

- Youjung Lee, an associate professor of social work, working on a project to develop, implement and assess a tele-mental health service for marginalized children and families during the pandemic, and
- Kaiming Ye, professor and chair of biomedical engineering, for development of a lighting system using a form of ultraviolet light to disinfect airborne coronavirus in a closed space, such as an office, subway or restaurant. Read more about Ye's research to provide solutions for the pandemic on page 23 of the latest issue of The Voice, [HERE](#).

The SUNY Prepare Innovation and Internship Program provides hands-on learning for students as they work with faculty on creating solutions to problems posed by the coronavirus pandemic. Read more about the program [HERE](#).

"We want to continue to harness the intellectual firepower of SUNY faculty, researchers, and students to develop the latest breakthroughs in the fight against COVID-19 or the next infectious disease," SUNY Chancellor Malatras said in announcing the grants. "This is just another example of how the largest system of public higher education is making an important impact."



DSI, compression distribution on the way

The dates for distribution of the 2020 Discretionary Salary Increases and salary compression pools are expected in March, and possibly as early as February.

UUP will provide members with updated information as soon as possible.

Regardless of the date of payment, both salary compression adjustments and DSI will be retroactive to July or September depending on a member's obligation. But the money—added to base salaries—is coming.



UUP will hold a virtual pre-retirement workshop on Jan. 26 and Jan. 28.

The two-part webinar will cover health care and Medicare, followed by union benefits, such as dental and vision coverage.

- Jan. 26, 2021: Health care and Medicare, noon
- Jan. 28, 2021: Union benefits, noon.

Click [HERE](#) to sign up.



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.

The masks are made in the USA of 100 percent cotton and are machine washable. The filters 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 about \$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.



eLearning is easy with Empire KnowledgeBank

EKB eLearning offers thousands of courses and videos to help 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.

Learning 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.

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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.

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.

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