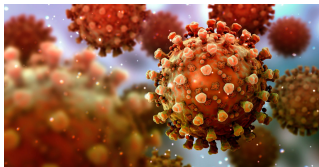


*This is the latest in a special series of UUPconnect issues dedicated to sharing important coronavirus-related information with UUP members. If you have questions or comments about items in this newsletter, please email them to [UUPConnect@uupmail.org](mailto:UUPConnect@uupmail.org).*



## COVID-19: The Numbers

These are cumulative numbers collected since the start of the pandemic. The numbers in parentheses are increases since Dec. 18, 2020:

### **New York**

1,081,885 confirmed cases in New York state (up 253,719 cases)

39,118 total deaths (increase of 2,941 deaths)

### **U.S.**

21,585,630 17,370,311 cases in the U.S. (up 4,215,319 cases)

365,359 312,524 deaths (increase of 52,835 deaths)

Globally, more than 88 million cases; 1.9 million deaths

From *Johns Hopkins University* as of Jan. 8



## Use SUNY to speed up COVID-19 vaccinations

UUP President Fred Kowal wants SUNY students, faculty, staff and facilities to play a major role in inoculating millions of New Yorkers to protect them from COVID-19.

Kowal, in a Jan. 5 UUP press release, said that SUNY medical students and medical residents could form volunteer SUNY "Vaccination Brigades" that would be deployed at campuses across the state. SUNY students

emergency, medical technicians, nurses, veterinarians and other medical professionals would also be encouraged to volunteer.

The student brigades would be part of the teams that would deliver vaccinations at SUNY's 64 campuses. Kowal said SUNY facilities—gymnasiums, lecture halls, athletic fields, and parking lots—could easily be used as staging areas to vaccinate thousands of people each day.

"SUNY can be a major player in ramping up vaccinations across the state," said Kowal, who leads America's largest higher education union. "We've got thousands of medical and pre-med students who can help with vaccinations, and thousands of non-medical students who could assist with support."

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



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## UUP calls for removal of Trump, censure of Stefanik, Zeldin

Appalled by the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol by a riotous mob incited by President Donald Trump, UUP President Fred Kowal released a pair of media statements that condemned the insurrection and called for the immediate removal of Trump from office.

The first release, in which he called the assault on the Capitol "a blatant attempt to subvert a fair and lawful election," was released Jan. 6. Click [HERE](#) to read that release.

In the second release, issued Jan. 7, Kowal said that Trump's removal from office was necessary to allow the country to begin healing to "bring us together as a nation indivisible."

He also called for the immediate censure of New York congressional members Chris Jacobs, Nicole Malliotakis, Elise Stefanik and Lee Zeldin by Congress for perpetuating the lie that the presidential election was stolen.

"Jacobs, Malliotakis, Stefanik and Zeldin joined 143 of their Republican colleagues to do Donald Trump's bidding by voting Jan. 6 to overturn the legitimate election results of the 2020 presidential election—mere hours after Trump's horde swarmed and vandalized the Capitol," Kowal said.

Click [HERE](#) to read the release.

In a Jan. 6 statement, AFT President Randi Weingarten said that Trump encouraged the assault on the Capitol and should be removed for his part in the event.

"Donald Trump made clear why he shouldn't be president. He enabled terrorists who stormed the U.S. Capitol and threatened the lives of duly elected officials while the world watched in horror," she said. "This reprehensible failure of the executive to protect the legislative branch is unconscionable, and for the safety of this country, Trump cannot leave office soon enough."

Read her full statement [HERE](#).



## Vaccines: coming soon to a large public place near you

The logistics of getting what could be as many as 38 million doses of vaccine to state residents are considerable. It could take most of the year to achieve that goal.

The state plans to use thousands of locations, ranging from urgent care centers to college and university campuses as vaccination sites. The large-scale vaccination sites, including campuses, would probably operate on a drive-through basis, similar to the way that testing sites have operated. (See UUP's call for vaccination brigades, above.)

The state is also asking that public agencies, including police and fire departments and transit systems, develop vaccine distribution plans for their employees.

The state has attributed the slower-than-expected rollout of the vaccination effort in New York to a slower-than-expected supply distribution from the federal government.

"We hope, pray and expect the supply from the federal government will be increasing," Cuomo said at a recent news briefing. "But we need it to increase."

New York is receiving about 300,000 doses of the vaccine a week. The state has identified nearly 3,800 sites for distribution, of which nearly 650 have access to the vaccine now.

All health care workers in New York are now eligible to receive the vaccine. More than 2 million health care workers qualify for the vaccine, and as of this week, the state had 900,000 doses on hand.



## Coronavirus variant poses no greater danger

New York state health officials confirmed earlier this week that the state has seen its first case of the fast-spreading coronavirus variant first reported in the United Kingdom.

Numerous other states have also reported the presence of the variant, which is believed to spread more rapidly than other strains of the virus.

However, the variant is not believed to be any more dangerous to people who contract it, and Pfizer and Moderna say their vaccines will be effective against it.



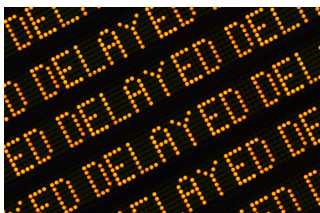
## Telecommuting into the spring

UUP's telecommuting agreement with SUNY has been extended through April 2, 2021.

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.



## Salary increases delayed again

The Governor's Office of Employee Relations has informed UUP that the state will again delay 2 percent across-the-board salary increases that were due to UUP members on July 1 or Sept. 1, 2020, depending on obligation.

The delay is expected to extend to the end of March 2021. The July 1/Sept. 1 increase is contractually provided for in the 2016-2022 State/UUP Agreement.

decision, we understand that the decision is driven by the state budget crisis, which has developed as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic," Kowal said. "To address this crisis, it remains critical that the federal government provide desperately needed assistance to state and local governments across the country, including New York."

After GOER notified UUP of the initial delay in payment in June, UUP filed class action grievances covering the delayed raises and related delays in minimum salary increases, including minimum salaries for adjuncts, which were scheduled to take effect in 2020.

UUP also filed an Improper Practice with the NYS Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) on behalf of residents working in facilities associated with SUNY's academic medical centers. Given the repeated delays in implementing UUP's negotiated raises, UUP continues to pursue all appropriate avenues for enforcing the contract and protecting its terms and conditions of employment.

New York is in desperate need of revenue to close a budget deficit that may reach \$14 billion. UUP is still advocating for the passage of an "Ultra-Millionaires' tax" and a "Billionaires' tax" by the Legislature. UUP will also increase its efforts to secure passage of the proposed reinstatement of the Stock Transfer Tax, an option could generate more than \$1 billion of new revenue for the state in the first month.

UUP is urging members to tell state legislators to fund the state's recovery.

"It is critical that NYS legislators hear from you," Kowal said. "Please take a few moments to ensure our voices are heard."

For additional information, go to [UUP's Campaign for Revenue Raisers webpage](#).




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### **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



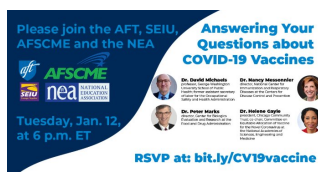
## UNUM changes

The New York State Department of Financial Services Life Bureau is requiring that Unum, UUP's life insurance carrier, no longer offer its value-added services (worldwide emergency travel assistance, life planning financial and legal resources, and employee assistance/LifeBalance – EAP) to UUP-represented members.

Because of this, UUP will no longer be able to offer the Worldwide Travel Assistance beginning Jan. 1. Statewide Membership Development Officer Tom Hoey made the announcement in a Jan. 4 email to UUP leaders.

The Life Bureau has determined that Unum's insurance policies do not contain specific enough language to allow them to offer value-added services to their customers.

Contact the UUP Benefit Trust Fund at 800-887-3863 with questions or for more information.



## AFT, unions slate vaccines town hall

The AFT, along with NEA, AFSCME and SEIU, will host a Jan. 12 virtual town hall about COVID-19 vaccines.

At the 6 p.m. town hall, members can get answers to questions about the vaccines from four doctors, who are vaccine experts. Those panelists are:

- Dr. David Michaels, professor at George Washington University's School of Public Health and former OSHA assistant secretary of labor
- Dr. Nancy Messonnier, director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the CDC
- Dr. Helene Gayle, co-chair of the Committee on Equitable Allocation of Vaccine for the Novel Coronavirus at the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine
- Dr. Peter Marks, director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the Food and Drug Administration

Click [HERE](#) to sign up to attend the virtual event.





## UUP congratulates Schumer as new Senate majority leader

In a Jan. 6 press statement, President Kowal congratulated Sen. Chuck Schumer for his new role as Senate majority leader.

"Sen. Schumer is a longtime friend to public higher education in New York," Kowal said. "Most recently, he showed his staunch support of SUNY and the crucial services provided by our members by delivering \$5.8 billion to New York's educational institutions as part of the Education Stabilization Fund in the federal government's COVID-19 relief bill approved in December.

"We are certain that Sen. Schumer will push for additional—and much-needed—COVID-19 relief for New York state, including for public education," he said. "We are confident that Sen. Schumer will continue to place public higher education at the top of his list of initiatives as majority leader."

Schumer will become majority leader once Democrats take control of the Senate—which the party secured with two Jan. 5 runoff election wins in Georgia. The winners, the Rev. Rafael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, won't be seated until Georgia confirms their victories; Georgia state law mandates that must occur by Jan. 22.

Still, those victories give each party 50 seats in the Senate. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, who, as president of the Senate, casts the deciding vote if the Senate is split, will be inaugurated Jan. 20.



## Walsh nominated as Labor Secretary

President-elect Joe Biden has selected Boston Mayor Marty Walsh as Labor Secretary.

Walsh served as president of Boston's Building and Construction Trades Council from 2011 to 2013. He became mayor in 2014.

"Marty comes to this with a closeness to the president-elect and an ability to get things done," AFT President Randi Weingarten told Politico.com.



## Pre-retirement workshops set

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

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.

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



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.

**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.

To receive the UUPconnect: Coronavirus newsletter, email UUP Media & Publications Director Mike Lisi at [mlisi@uupmail.org](mailto: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](mailto:mlisi@uupmail.org).

You can email questions and concerns about this newsletter to [UUPConnect@uupmail.org](mailto:UUPConnect@uupmail.org).

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