

COVID-19: CSEA Members Respond to the Crisis



From left: CSEA Long Island Developmental Center/Sagamore Children's Psychiatric Center Local 1st Vice President Jennifer Colon volunteers at the Jones Beach COVID-19 testing site. *(Photo provided by Jennifer Colon)*; CSEA Putnam County Department of Health members work at the county's COVID-19 drive-through testing site. *(Photo by Putnam County Health Department - NY Facebook page)*, Cleon Hayes, a driver at the Newburgh Enlarged City School District, passes bagged breakfasts and lunches to a fellow city school district member. *(Photo by Jessica Ladlee)*; SUNY Downstate Housekeeping Department employees Anthony Burke uses a disinfecting tool on an ambulance cot. *(Photo by David Galarza)*.

In midst of outbreak our members keep kids fed

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Cleaning after COVID-19

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'Families will need us now more than ever'

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Left, New York State AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer The Rev. Terrence Melvin, who is also a CSEA member, speaks about important state legislative issues with AFSCME International President Lee Saunders, center, and CSEA Executive Vice President Denise Berkley, right, during the AFSCME Legislative Reception in Albany in early March, before the COVID 19 crisis significantly affected New York. (Photo by Mark M. Kotzin)



CSEA President Mary E. Sullivan, left, discusses issues important to our members with State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli during the AFSCME Legislative Reception in Albany in early March, before the COVID 19 crisis significantly affected New York. (Photo by Mark M. Kotzin)

A statement from CSEA President Mary E. Sullivan:

“CSEA is deeply saddened to learn of the deaths of members of our union family due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we often say, an injury to one is an injury to all, and we mourn the loss of our members from this tragic situation. We extend our condolences to their families, co-workers and friends.”

Update your contact information with CSEA

Now more than ever, it's important for our union to be able to communicate. Please help us make sure we have your most current contact information. Update us by emailing infoupdate@cseainc.org (please include your full name) or by logging into or creating your online member account at <https://cseany.org/register>. Once logged in, select “MY CSEA ACCOUNT” in the application dropdown box.

email: infoupdate@cseainc.org • **web:** cseany.org/register

You deserve recognition during this unprecedented crisis

It's times like these we should think about the valuable and vital services many people take for granted and recognize your incredible sacrifices and value to our communities.

Many of you, whether you work for the state, county and municipal government as well as private sector workers, are still reporting to work to keep our state running. You deserve our recognition and praise.

Here's only a small list of the many CSEA brothers and sisters who are going to work and providing vital services: transportation workers who keep our roads clear and safe for others to get to hospitals or the grocery store; child care workers who watch the children of healthcare workers who are treating people; workers helping incredible numbers of suddenly-unemployed people apply for help; school workers handing out bagged meals to students so they won't go hungry; direct care workers caring for our most vulnerable citizens in our group homes and mental health facilities; emergency 911 workers and paramedics handling your personal crisis calls; corrections workers and public health workers keeping us all safe; health care workers in our public hospitals dealing directly with this crisis; municipal garbage workers still picking up our trash; nursing home workers who are taking on the role of family for residents whose family members can

no longer visit; custodians and cleaners ensuring our safety by cleaning and disinfecting our public spaces from COVID-19; and many more. You are the true everyday heroes in this crisis and you deserve our recognition.

We applaud you for the amazing services you provide during such a serious health crisis. I know you are facing challenges, but you should be very proud of the work they are doing. Everyone in our state should all feel a little safer as a result. New York's vital services will continue because of your hard work and dedication. I am proud of you all.

Please be assured that our union will continue to work with our leaders at every level of government to make sure you encounter as little risk as possible given the challenging crisis we face. I know you are making huge sacrifices every day; some of you are literally putting your lives on the line. You all deserve our deepest appreciation and thanks.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary".

Mary E. Sullivan, President

May 15 is deadline for submitting proposed Resolutions, changes to CSEA's Constitution & Bylaws

Proposed Resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union's 2020 Regular Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2020.

Proposed Resolutions or proposed amendments may be submitted only by a delegate and must be submitted on the proper

forms which are available from the Statewide Secretary's Office at CSEA headquarters and region offices.

Proposed Resolutions and proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws must be submitted no later than May 15, 2020, to Statewide Secretary Richard Bebo, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12210-2303.

COVID-19: CSEA Members Respond to the Crisis

Editor's note: New York State has been hard hit by COVID-19, with nearly 60,000 cases and nearly 1,000 deaths statewide as this edition went to press. These numbers are expected to grow significantly.

Through it all, CSEA members,

including those employed in essential services such as health care, direct care, correctional facilities and many more settings, are continuing to provide vital services.

They are also on the front lines responding to this pandemic, making

sure our communities are as healthy and safe as possible, including continuing to provide basic needs to those who need it the most.

Also closely monitoring the crisis is our union's Occupational Safety and Health Department, where

our staff professionals are ready to provide expert guidance to our members.

In this edition are numerous stories and accounts of our members providing these services.

Read more coverage on pages 1-12.

Public health workers on the front lines

BREWSTER — While the coronavirus outbreak is new territory for many, CSEA members working in public health have been training for a time such as this.

Federal, state, and county public health workers keep their skills sharp through continuing education and following data on trends. While supply shortages and other issues are creating challenges, our members' expertise is on full display.

"We have been training for this for years, said Putnam County Local President Jane Meunier, who was recently appointed chair of our Statewide Occupational Safety and Health Committee. "I have to say, our staff is doing a phenomenal job. They are under a tremendous amount of stress and the situation is changing every



Meunier

day, but they're holding it together."

Bordering Westchester County, where the initial outbreak of cases in our state occurred, the public health staff started preparing for the virus to hit Putnam County.

Following the creation of the first drive-through testing site in New Rochelle, workers in Putnam County created their own site.

Staffed by our members working as public health nurses, the testing site is at an undisclosed location to prevent a sudden influx of traffic. People being tested must have an appointment and a doctor's note. County workers are rotating shifts to allow for social distancing and much-needed rest periods.

"I am confident our health department is extremely prepared for this," Meunier said. "Right now, I

"We need to be the leaders that we are. We need to be supportive of our brothers and sisters working the front lines."



CSEA members working for the Putnam County Department of Health staff a drive-through mobile testing clinic. (Photo by Putnam County Health Department - NY Facebook page)

think we're depending upon people following the recommendations of

social distancing and people taking this seriously. This is not a joke."

Meunier added that as CSEA members, we can also do our part

by being supportive of fellow union brothers and sisters who are also

doing vital work.

"We need to be the leaders that we are," said Meunier. "We need to be supportive of our brothers and sisters working the front lines, such as people working in the grocery stores and pharmacies. This is very stressful for them and we need to be kind to each other."

— Jessica Ladlee



"I've been helping to train hospital staff on isolation precautions, how to perform swabbing for coronavirus tests as well as personal safety. At this point, it's training, training and retraining. I'm a nurse, so it feels great to use my skillset to help hospital staff."

— Simon Ulubabov, nurse educator, Nassau University Medical Center (photo provided by Lynne Kramer)

"We're watching out for our county. I call the county our family. We're watching out to make sure the people in Oneida County are staying healthy. If they are tested, we want to make sure they stay safe and that we get their temperatures and that they don't spread it to anyone else. We just want to make sure everyone stays healthy."

— Marina Kistner, RN, Oneida County Public Health Department and CSEA Oneida County Unit Secretary



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President Mary E. Sullivan in touch with

THE CSEA WORKFORCE

Our union is at forefront of workplace safety and health



With all the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the outbreak of a global pandemic, we are all on a heightened state of alert as we deal with all the questions and potential risks of exposure. Simply put, health and safety are certainly at the forefront of everyone's minds right now.

That's why I'm proud to acknowledge how advanced our union is when it comes to worker safety and health. Many unions don't have their own experts in those fields, but we do, with our staff professionals in CSEA's Occupational Safety and Health Department, which as far as I'm concerned, is the best in the entire country. We have a dedicated staff of highly trained professionals, including four occupational safety and health specialists, an epidemiologist, an industrial hygienist and our peer trainer program coordinator. They know the laws, rules and regulations and have the specialized training to work with our leadership, activists, union staff and regulatory agencies to make sure our members are safer and healthier in their workplaces and regularly work to spread their safety knowledge, promote hazard awareness and prevention and train our activists to do the same. I also want to show my appreciation for all the dedicated member activists who serve on their unit, local or region safety committees, or as peer trainers, who are so passionate about advocating for safety and health in the workplace.

We are rightly proud of our Occupational Safety and Health Department. They have been at the forefront working with our entire union staff and officers to make sure that we offer the best and most accurate information as we deal with this never seen before public health crisis. They helped us develop our online coronavirus information page, full of links, information and resources that our members can use to get answers to their questions and keep updated on a situation that changes rapidly. We are swimming in uncharted waters here, but we should all feel better knowing we have these staff professionals and everyone who works for our union, who have our backs when it comes to dealing with this outbreak. We know we don't have all the answers, but with their help we are

working hard to get them for you.

Ironically, due to the threat posed by the outbreak, we were forced to indefinitely postpone our biggest safety and health event our union puts together every two years, our Statewide Conference on Occupational Safety and Health. We already had nearly 700 union activists registered to attend this always-popular event, but we knew with the current situation, we could not afford to put people at risk. This is unfortunate, but we will find a way to share our knowledge and expertise with those who would have attended.

In April, we recognize Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, and I want to commend our legislative leaders for considering the pending "Slow Act" legislation that CSEA wrote and introduced which would increase the penalties for intrusions into roadside work zones. CSEA supports any measures that would make our highway and transportation workers safer as they work in such challenging and dangerous conditions. We will continue to dedicate our resources to make our work zones safer.

At the end of the month, we will also remember those we've lost to workplace deaths as we join our brothers and sisters throughout the Labor Movement in observing Workers Memorial Day. See our coverage in this issue.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate our union sister Jane Meunier, who serves as our Putnam County Local President, who I recently appointed as the first female chair of our Statewide Safety and Health Committee. Jane has served for years on this committee and I'm pleased to have her step up to this new role. I know she will bring a lot of expertise, enthusiasm and passion to this position, which will benefit all our members.

I urge you all to be safe, this month and always.

In solidarity,

Mary E. Sullivan, President

An overview of the COVID-19 federal stimulus package

President Donald Trump recently signed into law a \$2 trillion stimulus package to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a summary of some provisions of the law, including how it would affect New Yorkers.

State and Local Governments

A \$150 billion fund is created for state and local governments. The funding is based on population, but no state will receive a payment that is less than \$1.25 billion. States must use 45 percent of their funds for local governments with populations over 500,000.

New York is expected to receive \$5.1 billion for these provisions. Additionally, there is \$425 billion available to cities and states (along with businesses) through the Federal Reserve.

Direct Payments to Taxpayers

The federal government will make direct cash payments to taxpayers who fall within certain income ranges. The income amounts are based on your adjusted gross income (line 8b of your most recently filed federal 1040 tax form) New Yorkers are projected to receive \$15 billion under this program.

Single Tax Filers

Income Range: Up to \$99,000

Cash Payment: \$1,200, plus \$500 for any child that you claimed on your most recent federal tax return.

If your adjusted gross income is \$75,000 or less, you will receive \$1,200, plus \$500 for every child who you claimed on your most recently filed federal income tax form. For single tax filers who make between \$75,001-\$99,000, your cash payment will be reduced by 5 percent of your adjusted gross income that is more than \$75,000.

For example, a single-income filer with no kids who makes \$42,000

Cash Payment: \$1,200

Single-income filer with no kids who makes \$85,000

Cash Payment: \$700 (\$10,000 of income is above \$75,000. 5 percent of \$10,000 is \$500. \$1,200 minus \$500 = \$700)

Married Couples

Income Range: Up to \$198,000

Cash Payment: \$2,400, plus \$500 for any child who you claimed on your most recent federal tax return.

If your adjusted gross income is \$150,000 or

below, you will receive \$2,400, plus \$500 for every child who you claimed on your most recently filed federal income tax form. For married couples who make between \$150,001-\$197,999, your cash payment will be reduced by 5 percent of your adjusted gross income that is in excess of \$150,000.

For example, a married couple with two kids who make \$135,000

Cash Payment: \$3,400 (\$2,400 plus \$500 per child)

Married couple with two kids who make \$185,000

Cash Payment: \$1,650 (\$35,000 of their income is in excess of \$150,000. 5 percent of \$35,000 is \$1,750, which reduces their payment from \$2,400 to \$650, plus \$500 per child).

Qualifying incomes will be based on your 2019 income tax return, if you have already filed, or your 2018 return if you have not yet filed.

The federal stimulus package also includes grants for hospitals and other health care entities; child care and other human services; education, including school districts and higher education; expanded unemployment insurance and assistance for businesses affected by the pandemic. To learn more, visit cseany.org.

New York Paid Time off for COVID-19-Related Quarantines

All public and private sector employees in New York State who are subject to a precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19 are guaranteed paid leave and job protection. This law is currently in effect.

Employers are required to allow employees to use this time if they are subject to a precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine or isolation.

When they return to work, an employee is required to be restored to the same position of employment held by the employee prior to any leave taken. An employer cannot discharge, threaten, penalize, or in any other manner discriminate or retaliate against any employee because such employee has taken leave pursuant to this leave provision.

If an employee is subject to a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine because they returned to the country after traveling to a country which the CDC has a level two or three travel health notice and the travel to that country was not taken as part of the employee's employment or at the direction of their employer and the employee was provided notice of the travel health notice and limitations of this subdivision prior to such travel, they are not eligible to take leave pursuant to this law.

To get an order of precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine or isolation, you should contact your local Health Department. If you are unable

to get an order from your Health Department, you should submit documentation from a licensed medical provider that has treated you, attesting that you qualify for the order and follow up with your local Health Department to obtain the order and submit it as soon as it is available.

Public Employees

A public employee who is subject to a precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine or isolation will be paid their regular rate of pay by their employer for 14 days. An employee will not have to use accrued sick leave. If you are a public employee who is still being paid by your employer, you will not receive any extra pay while you are on a precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine or isolation.

Private Employers

This benefit is structured in a way that any person who makes up to \$150,000 per year will be kept financially whole. Unlike public employees, who pays a private sector employee will be dependent on the size of their employer (see chart). For smaller employers, paid family leave (PFL) will pay out 60 percent of a person's wage, up to \$840.70 per week; Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) will pay out 40 percent of a person's wage, up to \$2,043.92 per week. All waiting periods for PFL and TDI are waived for this specific paid time.

COVID-19 Paid Sick Time (Quarantine, Private Sector)				
Employer Size	Net Income	Employer Paid Time Off	Benefit	Other Notes
1-10	N/A	No employer paid time off, rather, will be compensated by PFL and TDI	PFL Up to \$840.70 / week TDI Up to \$2,043.92 / week	
1-10	\$1 million or more in net income.	5 Employer Paid Days and then compensated by PFL and TDI until quarantine order is lifted.	Days 1-5 Full pay from employer Days 6-14 PFL Up to \$840.70 / week TDI Up to \$2,043.92 / week	
11-99	N/A	5 Employer Paid Days and then compensated by PFL and TDI until quarantine order is lifted.	Days 1-5 Full pay from employer Days 6-14 PFL Up to \$840.70 / week TDI Up to \$2,043.92 / week	
100-More	N/A	14 Employer Paid Days	Fully paid by employer	No loss of accrued sick leave

'We are all essential workers:' Members provide vital services in hard-hit New York City

As the unprecedented COVID-19 worldwide pandemic hit New York, CSEA members across the Metropolitan Region continue to perform their essential jobs despite the universal challenges.

At the New York State Veterans Home in St. Albans, Queens, visitors are no longer allowed on the premises and a CSEA-represented nurse takes the temperature of essential employees at the door.

"We're trying to hold it together," said Unit President Allyson Baptiste. She cautioned that the dwindling supplies of protective gear has members worried. "The most important thing right now are those masks."



Baptiste

While staff currently has enough protective gloves and hand sanitizers, Baptiste is concerned that the masks staff are currently using is not sufficient or adequate since they are ill-fitting, for starters.

"Everybody is wearing a mask. Thank God no one has gotten sick," said Baptiste. At the Veterans Home, CSEA has members work in the nursing, dietary, engineering, housekeeping departments in addition to administrative staff.

As a precaution, a unit at the home, where some 250 veterans currently reside, has been vacated with the intention of using it to quarantine residents returning from the hospital or other facilities. It's a measure that raises some concerns for Baptiste since staff has to attend to their needs and the needs of other residents at the facility.

Experience equals expertise

If there is one state agency adept at dealing with a crisis of this magnitude, it's the AIDS Institute at the state Department of

Health. Already, workers have been reassigned to work on COVID-19 response and have been deployed statewide, according to Health Research Institute Local President Deborah Hanna, whose local includes the AIDS Institute.

"Everyone goes through a training before they do this. They learn universal precautions that are necessary and additional requirements to respond to something that is so unknown as COVID-19," said Hanna. "What I have heard so far is that it's tiring, but also gratifying to be a part of the response."



Hanna

Speaking just days before the governor virtually shut down the state with the exception of essential personnel, Hanna noted, "The state is working as well as everyone and overtime to respond as effectively as possible."

"There isn't a full road map," said Hanna. "We don't know how this [virus] fully works."

Hanna, who works in a building next to the World Trade Center, witnessed the attacks and was involved demanding worker protections in its aftermath. She compared the response to 9/11.

"It's very similar in a lot of ways," said Hanna. "There are a lot of questions, a lot of chaos and a lot of learning as you go along."

More importantly, Hanna emphasized the importance of unions during such a crisis. "It further supports the idea to me why it's important to have a union because it gives people an additional source to ask questions and get support," said Hanna. "I saw that after 9/11 and how our unions banded together to do things management couldn't do."



SUNY Downstate Housekeeping Department employees Anthony Burke uses a disinfecting tool on an ambulance cot

Concerns over equipment, safety

At Brooklyn's Kingsboro Psychiatric Center the looming concern was access to personal protective equipment and the admission of new individuals from correctional facilities.

"We are preparing one isolation area in case there is a need, an empty ward, but staff is still concerned that they need more safety precautions and equipment," said Kingsboro Local President Conrad Forsythe. "We have an open-door policy with the director if we have any concerns."

In addition to the cancellation of visits to the facility, management has also ordered a full medical report of incoming individuals within 24 hours, Forsythe noted.

Notwithstanding these measures, Forsythe said he is being bombarded

with calls from members pleading for personal protective equipment that management apparently is rationing in light of dwindling supplies.

"I'm keeping my head up, but I see panic in the members," said Forsythe. "They are fearful."

'Be strong, diligent and safe'

At SUNY Downstate a large white tent that occupies half a city block is being used for triage and to admit patients potentially infected by COVID-19.

Not unlike Kingsboro, but with added urgency since it is a hospital, workers are clamoring for masks, gowns and other protective gear.

"Our housekeeping and dietary workers, who interact with patients daily, need this safety equipment," said SUNY Downstate Local President Althea Green. "We also need to have the proper training on how to deal with this pandemic. It shouldn't be just for doctors and nurses."

While she's been assured by management that additional safety

Continued on page 7.

Continued from page 6.

supplies are on their way, Green fears for additional workers who may become infected. Five local members, including a relative of Green's, are currently under home quarantine after coming into contact with confirmed cases.

As of this report, Green said there were five confirmed cases of the virus at the hospital and one reported death. The patients are not CSEA members.

Nursing a fever over the weekend, but otherwise not exhibiting any classic symptoms of COVID-19, Green said, "Everybody is still functioning at the same level and doing their routine work., but people are afraid. The housekeepers are definitely afraid."

Two CSEA members who work in the housekeeping department at SUNY Downstate shared a few words



Green

on how they're coping with the pandemic.

"It's a very good feeling knowing that you can help our patients," said Anthony Burke, a SUNY Downstate housekeeping department employee. "Our main focus is safety, ours and our patients. Nothing is as important as making sure everything is clean and safe so that our patients feel comfortable and they can get better as soon as possible."

Burke wears a white surgical suit, plastic gloves and a special helmet with a large plastic visor. He also carries an instrument that resembles a large water gun, but it sprays disinfectant.

"We've always practiced safety and sanitary practices," said Burke. "But this situation goes beyond sanitizing. It's overwhelming with so many (COVID-19) cases and seeing how the community is affected."

Maurice Dunaway, a longtime CSEA activist and veteran of other epidemics, said the vibe at the hospital was different this time.

"It's been very stressful with all the suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases," said Dunaway, a supervisor in the housekeeping department and



Left, CSEA SUNY Downstate Local Vice President Maurice Dunaway and Anthony Burke, in white suit, who both work at the hospital's Housekeeping Department, are among the workers whose role of disinfecting the hospital during this pandemic is vital in protecting workers and the community.

vice president of our union's SUNY Downstate Local. "We need to treat every case as if it's positive."

Dunaway said there were six confirmed COVID-19 cases at the hospital in mid-March. As this edition was going to press, he said there was close to 40 cases.

His advice to other essential and frontline workers throughout the state, "Be strong, be diligent and be safe. It's hard, but this is what we do."

Keeping safe

At group homes run by the Brooklyn Developmental Center, several individuals have tested positive for the coronavirus and our Brooklyn Developmental Center Local officers had asked staff not to float to the center's houses until further notice.

"Sometimes, we have to institute these practices to save our members and the individuals," said Brooklyn Developmental Center Local President Faye Wilkie Fields.

Brooklyn Developmental Center

runs 22 houses and staff periodically floats to different homes whenever there is a need.

"We closed the dayhab completely due to the virus because we didn't want the individuals to come into the program since we've had these confirmed and suspected cases," said Wilkie Fields. "We're also trying to get safety equipment and supplies to these three houses and we have asked for a deep cleaning of those houses."

Staff at those houses continue to work and go home, despite confirmed cases at their sites.

"They have to wear gowns and masks in the homes daily," said Wilkie Fields, who had just received two gallons of hand sanitizer from the state to distribute among the houses. "We are all essential workers."



Wilkie Fields



CSEA SUNY Downstate Local Vice President Maurice Dunaway, second from right, and Anthony Burke, in white suit at far right, who both work at the hospital's Housekeeping Department, discuss how the facility is being disinfected around the clock with two doctors, left.

Highway, DOT workers lend support to testing site

BROOKHAVEN — During this COVID-19 pandemic, some of our members providing vital services have been behind the scenes.

Our members at the Town of Brookhaven Highway Department have been providing essential support to the COVID-19 drive-thru testing site at SUNY Stony Brook through building and installing signs at the town's in-house sign shop to

help motorists navigate the site.

Town Highway Department employees and state Department of Transportation workers delivered hundreds of barricades and traffic cones, as well as electronic signs, to be used at the site.

Here are some images from our members' efforts.

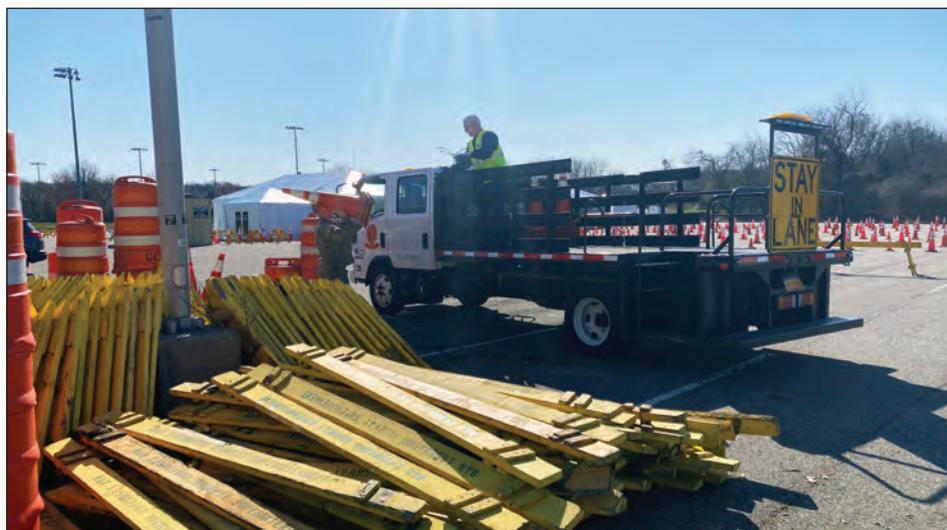
— Wendi Bowie



Brookhaven Highway Department and state Department of Transportation workers deliver and unload hundreds of barricades and traffic cones, as well as electronic signs, to be used at Suffolk County's drive-through COVID-19 mobile testing facility located at Stony Brook University's South P lot. CSEA members also manufactured, and installed, custom signs in the town's in-house sign shop to assist drivers navigating the site. (Photo provided by the Town of Brookhaven)



Town of Brookhaven Highway Department Unit members Michelle Biondi-Baird and Joe Manzella are busy in the town's in-house sign shop making signs for the SUNY Stony Brook COVID-19 testing area. (Photo provided by Wally Greene)



“We are professionals and our job is to provide essential services to the public daily and in emergency situations.”

—Deborah Feinstein, nursing assistant, Stony Brook University Hospital (photo provided by Carlos Speight)

In midst of outbreak, our members keep kids fed

Across the state, many CSEA members employed at school districts are finding ways to work to help their school community while school is shut down.

At many districts across the state, CSEA members have been playing a key role in ensuring that children continue to receive meals. Many families rely heavily on school-provided meals.

'Above and beyond'

When CSEA members steered two trucks onto the City of Newburgh's Grand Street one recent morning and then stopped outside the Newburgh Free Library, they had a welcoming awaiting them.

That's because our members working in food services, security, and maintenance at the Newburgh School District have teamed up to ensure students are fed even though coronavirus has shuttered schools. With free breakfast and lunch offered throughout the district, our

members are ensuring students' nutritional needs are met.

"Our members have gone above and beyond on behalf of our students during this outbreak," said Newburgh School District Unit President Joseph Ammons. "They know our breakfast and lunch programs are of vital importance to

so many families in our community, even more so now with schools closed. I'm very proud of them."

In Newburgh, the team distributing meals load the two trucks and makes stops at eight different school sites. Workers distribute a bagged lunch for that day and breakfast for the next morning.

On that recent morning at the Newburgh Free Library, security guards Adeline

Haynes and Lillian Paz sent students up, one family at a time, to the tables set up by our members Cleon Hayes, Kevin Kimlow, and Everton Soares. The district's assistant superintendent of equity, Pedro Roman, handed the bags of food to the students.



Cleon Hayes, a driver for the Newburgh Enlarged City School District, passes bagged breakfasts and lunches to a fellow district staff member.



"All communities are concerned about feeding children whose families don't have the means to provide three meals a day. In these uncertain times, we wanted to make sure the families in need were provided with a nutritious breakfast and lunch for their children. I'm glad we were able to work with the school district to provide this resource."

— Diana Badala, food service worker, Connetquot Central School District (photo provided)



Katie White, Joyce Waite and Food Service Manager Ericka Sloan prep lunches. (Photo provided by the Greenwich Central School District)

It's an arrangement most school districts have enacted in some form, with some using school buses to deliver meals in more rural areas.

Newburgh's food services department has been honored three years in a row by the Food Research and Action Center as the third best school breakfast program in the country.

Swinging into action

Greenwich Central School District kitchen and transportation staff have been packing and delivering meals to students who would otherwise miss the meals, and the nutrition, normally provided at school.

The Greenwich food plan swung into action immediately following the emergency school closings in New York and began mid-March with deliveries of breakfast and lunch three days a week. Plans for expanded deliveries are underway.

"I am so very proud to be part of the Greenwich community and a CSEA member at Greenwich Central School District," said Greenwich Central School District Unit President Brenda Facin, who also serves as our union's Capital Region 2nd Vice President.

— Jessica Ladlee and Therese Assalian



Holland Patent School District cafeteria workers Judith Smith and Connie Langdon prepare school lunches to deliver to students in the district in need. (Photo by Nicholas Newcomb)

Despite strong preparation, town facing challenges

GREENBURGH — When the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic hit communities across New York, even some of our best prepared members are finding response a challenge.

When reports of a coronavirus outbreak in China made their way to the United States, Town of Greenburgh Unit President Jared Rosenberg knew it was time for an inventory check.

Rosenberg, the paramedic supervisor at the Town of Greenburgh in Westchester County, is trained to be ready for a crisis. Overseeing first responders who need to stay safe while treating patients, Rosenberg checked his department's stock of personal protective equipment and placed orders for items he thought might be needed.

Emergency medical technicians and paramedics in Greenburgh were assigned a personal protection kit, Rosenberg said. That includes N-95 masks, Tyvek suits, gowns, full eye protection and wipes. There are roughly 120 police officers working for the town, who often respond on

medical calls as well, so Rosenberg set out getting extra supplies for them.

"Everything we are doing for the people who are going into potential calls is based on the CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] and Department of Health guidelines," Rosenberg said. "Even our dispatchers, both police and civilian, were given plenty of information to start fielding the appropriate questions as calls come in. We respond to calls no matter what, but we're screening because we want to know on arrival if you could have had any possible exposure to coronavirus."

Thanks to continued training in emergency management and previous concerns about outbreaks for diseases such as Ebola, Rosenberg said members of his department have been fitted for AV-2000 facepieces sold by 3M Scott.

"These masks are kind of like the Scott air packs you'd see on firefighters when they go into burning buildings," said Rosenberg.



In this file photo, Town of Greenburgh Unit President Jared Rosenberg prepares to check supplies outside a town ambulance.

"If needed, we can use them and clean them."

Rosenberg credited good communication amongst local governments, the county, and the state for keeping emergency responders updated on the latest reports and recommendations.

Ultimately, he said, keeping first responders safe is key in containing this outbreak.

"If one person brings it in and you have to quarantine 14 officers, let's say, you could lose a serious portion of your police department," Rosenberg said. "People have been coming up with contingency plans, including mutual aid from other jurisdictions. We're used to working in this kind of environment, to be ready."

Despite strong preparation and

good planning, the town began facing challenges as COVID-19 raged through Westchester County.

Rosenberg recently told AFSCME in a profile that about 20 percent of the calls his department gets every day are COVID-19 related.

"Our most immediate concern is a shortage of equipment," Rosenberg said. "We need more personal protective equipment, including N-95 masks. We've resorted to collecting masks from the public. So far, over 195 masks and 1,000 surgical masks have been donated by residents. We're grateful for what we have collected, but this is no way to prepare for an uptick in cases. We need these masks, and we need them now."

Rosenberg also noted that the town needs more access to testing, not only for residents who are potentially infected but for the first responders who have contact with them. As this edition went to press, he said that of 40 workers who are trained to respond to COVID-19, about six workers have been forced to self-quarantine due to lack of access to tests.

"We cannot afford to have between 10 percent and 15 percent of our workforce unable to report to work for at least two weeks because they do not know if they've been exposed," Rosenberg said. "Everyone I work with is committed to this community. We also live here. We will fight this, but the sacrifice of people on the front lines deserves respect."

— Jessica Ladlee, with AFSCME

Cleaning after COVID-19

Editor's Note: Here are some guidelines on how to clean and disinfect your work site. We urge you to cut out this page and post it in a location where you and your co-workers can easily reference it. If you have any safety and health concerns, immediately contact your CSEA local or unit leadership or our union's Occupational Safety and Health Department at (800) 342-4146 and follow the prompts.

Join us for webinars on cleaning, disinfection

CSEA is making every effort to assist our members in the response to COVID-19.

As part of this, we are offering webinars on how to properly clean and disinfect COVID-19. The first of these webinars was held March 21, and more dates and times for this webinar will be announced.

During this unprecedented outbreak, CSEA wants to ensure your right to a safe and healthy workplace. This one-hour webinar is for those who have to clean areas that may be affected by the coronavirus, will address the hazards and risks of cleaning an area with Covid-19, the responsibilities of your employer to protect you, best practices and worker protections and your rights if you get sick.

Please share this information with any of our members in these titles who are responsible for cleaning.

We will be recording the webinars for future viewing should members be unable to attend a live webinar, but still require the information. Learn more at cseany.org/coronavirus-information.

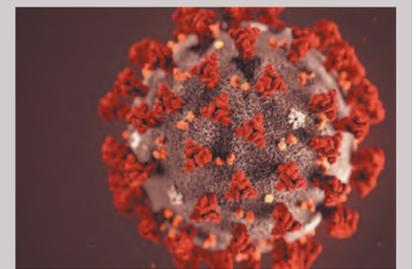
Cleaning after COVID-19

Cleaning and Disinfection are different.

- **Cleaning** removes germs, dirt, and impurities.
- Cleaning does not kill germs but lowers the risk of spreading infection.
- Dirty surfaces should be first cleaned using a detergent or soap and water.
- **Disinfecting** uses chemicals to kill germs on surfaces.
- When disinfecting, only use approved disinfectants or bleach solution.
- **Disinfectants work better on clean surfaces.**

Protecting Yourself When Cleaning

- **Close off the suspected area and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection.**
- **Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.** If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- **Wear disposable gloves for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.** Gloves should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used.
- Additional protective equipment might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used.
- Always follow manufacturer's instructions for all disinfectants used.
- **Cleaning staff should immediately report breaches in PPE (e.g., tear in gloves) or any potential exposures to their supervisor.**
- A surgical or medical style mask will not protect you from chemicals.
- If bleach solutions are used, make sure the bleach hasn't passed the expiration date. **Never mix bleach and ammonia.**



Coronavirus and COVID-19

- Coronavirus are a large group of viruses that can infect both humans and animals.
- SARS-Cov-2 is the actual name of the specific strain of the coronavirus in the news now.
- Primarily spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- **Person-to-Person Contact is the Primary mode of transmission.** (Less than 6 feet from infected individuals)
- It also may be possible to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it.
- The virus may remain active on smooth surfaces for hours to up to 3 days.
- People are most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms.

CSEA Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions

Here are answers to some of the most commonly asked questions concerning health and safety-specific issues with COVID-19. Questions or concerns specific to your place of employment should be discussed with your CSEA leadership or Labor Relations Specialist.

Q. Why isn't my employer providing hand sanitizer?

A. There is a massive shortage on hand sanitizer right now due to this outbreak. There are plans to produce and distribute as much as possible as quickly as possible, but hand sanitizer may not be available everywhere. The CDC continues to

recommend washing hands with soap for 20 seconds whenever possible as the best defense.

Q. Should I wear a mask?

A. According to the CDC: Wear a face mask if you are sick.

- If you are sick: You should wear a face mask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a health care provider's office. If you are not able to wear a face mask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are

caring for you should wear a face mask if they enter your room.

- If you are NOT sick: You do not need to wear a face mask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a face mask). Face masks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

Q. What products work for the cleaning/disinfecting of COVID-19?

A. Any EPA/DEC registered product will disinfect surfaces of COVID-19. For a list of these products, visit www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/covid19.pdf.



Wells: ‘Families will need us now more than ever’

For CSEA/VOICE home-based child care providers, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the role that providers play in their communities: an irreplaceable anchor for numerous children and families.

“Parents who have to go to work to keep food on the table and pay the bills will need us now more than ever,” said CSEA/VOICE Local 100A President

Pam Wells, who runs a day care in Washington County. “As schools close, the nurses, police officers and thousands of other public service

“We will continue to do our jobs, serve our communities, and take care of our kids, for as long as it is safe to do so.”

workers responding to this crisis will also need child care for their school-age children.”

Wells said she was worried whether home-based child care operators like hers would be able to remain open and whether they would have enough supplies to last through the pandemic.

“We will continue to do our jobs, serve our communities, and take care of our kids, for as long as it is safe to do so,” Wells said. “Nothing matters more than protecting them.”

— Provided by ASFCME

Hoffmann: ‘Child care is essential’

WAPPINGERS FALLS — CSEA/VOICE Group Family Child Care Provider Marisol Hoffmann and her staff, who run Feels Like Home, Inc. in Wappingers Falls, Dutchess County, take care of the kids of parents who

deliver vital public services. In her own words, Hoffmann discusses how she and her staff have continued to provide services during the COVID-19 pandemic: “I have two Group Family Child Care Programs and a staff of six wonderful providers,”

Hoffmann said.

“We serve parents who are bankers, nurses, a police officer, two moms who are corrections officers and one single mom who is a New York State Trooper.

My staff and I are here to provide uninterrupted service to those who are among those with

the highest risk of exposure to COVID19: essential service workers and first responders. My staff and I consider it a privilege and an honor to care for these children and provide nutritious meals. We are maintaining our usual curriculum and schedule to maintain a sense of normalcy in their lives. We will get through this together.

To all daycare providers, please use all the great resources available to us. My union rep, [CSEA/VOICE Dutchess County Representative]

Nikki Johnson, reached out to me as well as my OCFS licensor, Keelie Thomas. They have both been amazing. I also want to give a huge shout-out to the Child Care Council for checking in with me and even distributing much-needed hand

“My staff and I consider it a privilege and an honor to care for these children and provide nutritious meals. We are maintaining our usual curriculum and schedule to maintain a sense of normalcy in their lives.”



Pam Wells disinfects toys used in her day care program. (Photo provided by Pam Wells)



Marisol Hoffmann, shown here at her day care. “I wear this shirt to remind parents that we as child care providers are well informed, well stocked and just about ready for anything. A little humor goes a long way. Relax, parents, we got this. Now, you are free to save the world.” (Photo provided)

sanitizer.

We are all working together and together we will get through this. Better days are ahead. Be well and safe.”

— Jill Asencio

Watson: ‘Learning continues at my program’

Renee Watson, a CSEA/VOICE Group Family Child Care Provider in Nassau County, is playing a key role in helping the children in her care continue their education while schools are closed. In her own words, Watson discusses how she is helping provide this vital service:

“My kids [have] parents who don’t have the ability to work from home; they are kids of firefighters, nurses, MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority) employees and police officers.

I feel great about being able to help out when so many people, including myself, feel so helpless and concerned. These kids brighten my day. The kids in my care are so happy and filled with joy and they offer so much promise for a better tomorrow.

It’s a pleasure to provide my families with the help they need. For example, many of my children have online distance learning assignments from their schools that we assist them with, and for the few who don’t have specified class work/homework, we provide them with age appropriate worksheets and/or web-based assignments to complete, on a daily basis. Learning continues at my program.”

— Jill Asencio



Renee Watson helps a child complete school work. (Photo provided)

Time to Be Counted in the 2020 U.S. Census!

The 2020 U.S. Census is now available to be completed online.

As invitation postcards were mailed to households across the U.S., the Census Bureau also launched its online form on its website at census.gov. The census can be completed online, over the phone or by mail.

At this time, when social distancing is being promoted as the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we urge you to fill out your census form online. Not only is this the easiest way to fill out the census, but it will also limit

the number of home visits census workers will have to conduct and help to promote public health.

Some households located in areas with limited internet access will receive a paper form in the first mailing. Households that have not responded online or by phone will receive a paper form between April 8-16. Census takers are due to follow up with households that have not responded later this year. Learn more about our members' efforts to ensure an accurate census count at cseany.org/census.



Watch out for these census hoaxes

Responding to the 2020 U.S. Census is not only important for numerous public programs, but is safe.

The Census Bureau is dedicated to keeping your information secure, and census employees take an oath to never reveal your responses, even to law enforcement agencies.

However, there are scams and hoaxes, many of which involve impersonating census employees to get your information.

There have been reports that the "Department of Home Affairs" are going door to door to check residents' IDs for the census. Meanwhile, these people are seeking to commit a crime, likely theft of your information or property.

Firstly, there is no Department of Home Affairs. The Census Bureau employees will be clearly identifiable with U.S. Department of Commerce ID badges and will carry a briefcase indicating their affiliation with the bureau. They will explain the reason for their visit.

Census employees will not ask you for identification. They will also never ask you for your Social Security number, bank account information, credit card numbers, political affiliation or donations.

If you get a visit from someone who you suspect does not work for the Census Bureau, call your local police department or the Census Bureau at 800-923-8282.



What you will be asked

The 2020 Census will ask a few simple questions about

you and everyone who is or will be living with you on April 1, 2020.

You will be asked to count everyone who lives and sleeps in your home as of April 1, 2020, including young children, roommates and any family members or friends who are living with you, even temporarily.

You will also be asked whether your home is rented or owned; your telephone number and names, ages, dates of birth, gender identification, race and national origin of all living in your home.

How to respond

Online

You can respond to the census using a computer, tablet or smartphone. To access the form, visit <https://my2020census.gov>.

Please note that you can't save your progress; the census must be completed in one sitting. You can complete the form in English or other languages.

The quickest way to respond to the census is online with your Census ID, which easily links your response with your address. You can still respond if you don't have a Census ID.

Your Census ID can be found on the letter or questionnaire you received from the Census Bureau in March. After clicking the "Start Questionnaire" button on the online

form, you will be prompted to enter your Census ID.

Phone

You have the option of completing the questionnaire by phone. To begin, call 844-330-2020, or call the number associated with your preferred language, as noted on the website's Phone Response Guide.

Mail

If you live in an area with limited internet access, you may have received a paper form along with your invitation letter. If you don't respond by phone or online, you will receive a paper questionnaire. Again, due to the coronavirus outbreak, online or phone responses are preferred.

Be Counted

for a chance to win an iPad!



- Begins April 1 - Census Day.
- Only **CSEA members and retirees** can enter.
- After you respond to the Census, complete the entry form at cseany.org/census.
- Seven winners randomly drawn on July 31. One from **each region** and one from our **retiree division**.

Visit cseany.org/census for more information and to enter to win!

The Census determines how much **federal funding** NY receives for health care, education, housing, transportation, and other **vital services**.

Welcome our new Statewide Leadership team!

Mary E. Sullivan, Statewide President

ALBANY— Shortly after Mary E. Sullivan began working at the Herkimer County Department of Social Services, CSEA union representatives came around and asked her if she would be interested in running for office.



Sullivan responded, jokingly, 'How about president?'

A month later, Sullivan was the Herkimer County Unit President. A month after she began serving in union office, she was negotiating her unit's contract with the county. In fact, she was sitting across the negotiating table from her high school guidance counselor.

More than 35 years later, Sullivan now leads our union. Through the years, she served in leadership posts on every level of CSEA. From unit president, she became Herkimer

County Local President. She later served as treasurer and 1st vice president of our Central Region.

Sullivan was elected as our union's Statewide Treasurer by our union's Board of Directors to replace the treasurer who had retired. She was overwhelmingly re-elected to that position twice. In 1994, Sullivan was elected our union's Executive Vice President, a position she served in until becoming our Statewide President on Nov. 1, 2019.

In February, she was the first woman — and first local government division member — to be elected by the membership to a full term as Statewide President.

Her perspective as a union woman in local government has driven her activism.

Shortly after becoming unit president, Sullivan quickly got involved with our union, including getting involved in our union's Central Region, which was then

known as a conference, and meeting many of our union sisters and brothers.

"I learned from my peers because there were no [union] education programs at the time," she said.

Sullivan found her local government service to be valuable experience in her leadership roles.

"One of the things that local government members bring to the table is that we are closer to the action; we deal with our employer every single day," Sullivan said. "On the state side, you may deal with state agency directors or other staff people, but not

always [elected officials]. In local government, you're going to see your employer at the gas station or grocery store. That may make it easier for us to directly affect things in our community."

As CSEA's President, Sullivan aims to enhance our union's communications, education and opportunities to be involved in our

union. She also wants to make our union more inclusive, including urging women to get more involved, noting that women, as well as local government members, comprise the majority of our members.

"I think most women are more willing to build coalitions and work in concert with those coalitions to get the job done," Sullivan said. "Women are becoming more willing to support one another and more women are stepping forward. We have to encourage women to be more engaged — they're the majority of this organization just like local government members. There just needs to be a balance in the thought process in the decisions we make."

In recent weeks, Sullivan has also faced leading our union amid the coronavirus outbreak. "It's been an interesting [several] weeks trying to manage CSEA, between taking care of our members, but staff as well," she said.

— Janice Gavin

"We have to encourage women to be more engaged."

Denise Berkley, Executive Vice President

ALBANY — Denise Berkley laughed when asked about being introduced as our union's new executive vice president, figuring by now, most CSEA members know who she is.



"I've been around for a while," she said with a chuckle, illuminated by her ever-present smile.

More than 40 years, in case you're keeping track.

Berkley began her union career a few years after starting work in 1973 at the Brooklyn Developmental Center. In 1979, she became a union steward, and in 1981, she was elected

local president.

She initially got involved in our union because she didn't like the way she and her co-workers were being treated.

"I didn't like the way management was treating our members, so I decided to run for president of the union so I could better protect them," she said.

What followed was decades of union activism that continue to this day, with Berkley moving up through the ranks, serving in roles too numerous to mention at every level of our union. In 2008, she was elected our statewide secretary, a role that she served in for three

terms and one that she really enjoyed.

"I loved being the statewide secretary," Berkley said. "I got the chance to interact with so many members, and I enjoyed helping them and making the jobs of our leaders and activists a little easier."

A self-proclaimed "people person," Berkley also enjoyed traveling throughout the state to conduct trainings for union secretaries.

"I believe very much in giving the leadership all the knowledge they need to do their jobs better," she said.

Berkley said that she's still adjusting to switching her leadership role in our union, but it's a good adjustment.

"I'm learning what this new role is, but I'm loving it," she said, only weeks into the job.

For now, Berkley wants to focus her work on leadership education, based on her two guiding principles. First, she looks upon her union work as a ministry, in her role as a servant leader. Second, she wants to give our union leaders as much information and knowledge as possible to be better leaders.

"If we can make [our union leaders] stronger leaders by giving them more information and the tools they need, we can make a big difference in our union," Berkley said.

— Mark M. Kotzin

"If we can make [our union leaders] stronger leaders by giving them more information and the tools they need, we can make a big difference in our union."

Welcome our new Statewide Leadership team!

Richard Bebo, Statewide Secretary

ALBANY — For Richard Bebo, what started out as a favor for a friend has turned into a passion for service that has brought him to the highest ranks of our union leadership.



Bebo, a program aide at the New York State Department of Transportation's Office of Construction in Albany, said he began his union advocacy in 2006 after his former Local president retired. His friend, who was the former local vice president, moved up to Local president and asked Bebo to serve as vice president.

Bebo admitted that he really didn't know what he was getting himself into, but in short order, he was bitten — hard — by the union bug.

While attending our union's Annual Delegates Meeting that year, he was overwhelmed with what he witnessed, leading him to want more.

"The camaraderie of seeing all those people together, the passion of hearing all the speakers, the entire week was amazing," Bebo said. "Getting all the information I got, and to realize the purpose of what our union was, it was inspiring."

What it inspired him to do was become more involved. He soon joined CSEA's third Leadership Education And Development (LEAD) Program class, wanting to "make myself a better activist, a better leader."

Following that, he ran for local president in 2013, a position he served in for two terms. In 2014, he was appointed 3rd vice president of our union's Capital Region, successfully running two years later for Capital Region executive vice president.

Now, Bebo has stepped into his most challenging union role to date, elected as our statewide secretary.

"The reason I ran is I wanted to be able to do what we were successfully doing in the region and in my local at the statewide level," he said. "The education, the trainings, the communications, and being a resource for the members."

"What motivates me is serving our members," Bebo said. "When I walked away from that first ADM, I realized this is something I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to be a statewide officer because I knew I wanted to serve at that level. I've always loved being a resource to the members of my local and my region, and I look forward to being a resource to the members across the state."

Bebo said he is driven by some important principles.

"I have values that have stuck with me throughout my career in the union," he said. "Be accountable, be open, listen with respect and stand together. That leads to a stronger union."

Bebo said he wants to not only be a catalyst for positive change, but also wants to inspire others to be as enthusiastic about our union as he is.

"I don't want members to just be in our union, I want our members to be excited to be in our union," he said.

— Mark M. Kotzin

Nicole Meeks, Treasurer

ALBANY — For Nicole Meeks, growing up in a "big union family" was enough to make her realize the value of unions.

"My father had been in the sheet metal trades for 40 years, and that union kept him protected and employed for that whole time," she said. "Seeing how my father was gainfully employed thanks to his union led me to get more involved in our union."

Meeks, an accountant 2 in the City of Syracuse's Department of Aviation for the past 20 years, got her CSEA start volunteering for a union committee. A few years later, she joined the union's negotiating team.

"I wanted to help other people who might have issues or concerns in their jobs," she said. "I wanted to make sure that we still received the benefits that our brothers and sisters had fought for."

Falling back on her four-year degree in accounting, Meeks naturally gravitated to one of the most unsung roles within our union, that of the treasurer. "I always said it takes a special kind of person to be a union treasurer," she said.

She became treasurer of her CSEA unit, later moving up to vice president, and then president of her

city unit, all the while serving on numerous union committees.

But it was always that background in numbers that kept her coming back to that treasurer role, serving first as local and then Central Region treasurer.

"Having that accounting and auditing background, it really helps with the treasurer positions I have held," she said. "It has helped me help other units and locals to do that budget work they have to do."

Meeks said she was proud she was able to use her skills to train our members to get their local union finances in order.

As statewide treasurer, Meeks hopes to bring all her knowledge

and expertise to help an even wider audience of CSEA leaders throughout the state.

"I'm looking forward to meeting new members and traveling around the state and doing training for our treasurers," she said. "A lot of them are probably overwhelmed and

I want to be able to ease their minds, to let them know that I'm here as a resource to help them."

Her goal is to help our union's leaders continue to be good stewards of their union money.

"I want to assist the treasurers and the presidents in making good decisions for our members when it comes to union finances," Meeks said. "I want to do everything I can to help those people."

— Mark M. Kotzin

"I have values that have stuck with me throughout my career in the union. Be accountable, be open, listen with respect and stand together. That leads to a stronger union."

"I'm looking forward to meeting new members and traveling around the state and doing training for our treasurers. A lot of them are probably overwhelmed and I want to be able to ease their minds, to let them know that I'm here as a resource to help them."

Workers' Memorial Day: Remember fallen workers

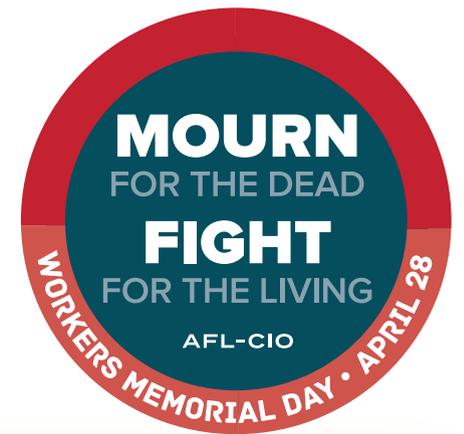
On April 28, CSEA and workers around the world will mark Workers' Memorial Day, when we remember those who lost their lives or were severely injured while doing their jobs.

Among this number are several

CSEA-represented brothers who have died on the job since April 2018: Jean MacDonald, Jeffrey Farrell, Dennis "Matt" Howe and Tom Walter.

We remember them not just as workers who passed away on the job, but as the people they were.

We also use Workers' Memorial Day to renew our ongoing commitment to safe and healthy workplaces. These workplace deaths are preventable, and we will continue to fight until everyone can do their jobs safely.



In Memoriam



Jean MacDonald, 61
Nov. 14, 2018

Town of Hempstead sanitation worker Jean L. MacDonald, 61, passed away on Nov. 14, 2018, from injuries sustained while collecting leaves on a local street. MacDonald, who lived in Freeport, was known as an "exemplary" and "hardworking" 12-year employee of the town.

In Memoriam



Jeffrey Farrell, 30
Jan. 18, 2019

Monroe County employee Jeffrey Farrell, 30, passed away Jan. 18, 2019, from a workplace incident while he was working below ground inside a sewer grate. A tractor-trailer traveled down an embankment and struck a light pole and two vehicles. Farrell passed away while trying to escape.

A recent county hire, Farrell is survived by his parents, sister and other extended family, including his dog. He also enjoyed playing hockey.

In Memoriam



Dennis "Matt" Howe, 45
March 18, 2019

State Department of Transportation Employee Dennis "Matt" Howe, 45, passed away on March 18, 2019, from injuries sustained in a March 13 incident in which a tractor-trailer struck a DOT vehicle he was in while a state crew was performing highway safety work.

In Memoriam



Tom Walter, 28
Feb. 5, 2020

Orange County Department of Health employee Tom Walter, 28, passed away Feb. 5, 2020, from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident while driving a county-owned vehicle. Outside of work, Walter was a volunteer firefighter and avid outdoorsman. He is survived by his parents, siblings, nieces and nephews and extended family.

CSEA keeping up fight for work zone safety

Working on or near traveled roads is one of the most dangerous environments for CSEA members.

Since CSEA began keeping records in 1983, more than 50 of our members have been killed on the job in work zones, with nearly half of these incidents caused by the traveling public.

Our union is fighting to make work zones safer for all, including working with our state elected officials to pass legislation to increase work zone safety, conducting training programs and raising public awareness about the potential hazard faced by those who work on or near roadways.

The State Senate, led by State

Sen. Tim Kennedy, recently unanimously passed a bill (S.6094A) that would expand protections in work zones by sharply increasing fines for endangering a highway worker and would direct a majority of revenues collected from such fines to making work zones safer.

The bill also calls for expanded efforts around public education

and outreach on work zone safety. The bill is now in the Assembly Transportation Committee.

In addition to supporting this stand-alone bill, CSEA is strongly advocating for the provisions of this bill to be included in the state budget.

Visit cseany.org/safety for more information.

CSEA Employee Benefit Fund FAQs

What is the EBF?

The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) is best known for the dental, vision and reimbursement benefits it offers to CSEA members. We are a trust fund, not an insurance company. The EBF is managed by a board of trustees who help to ensure we are meeting the ever changing needs of our members. CSEA President Mary E. Sullivan also serves as EBF's Chairperson.

Who has these benefits?

Full-time CSEA members employed by New York State and the Unified Court System are eligible for the benefits set forth in their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Part-time, seasonal and per diem employees need to contact their employer for eligibility requirements.

Local Government (counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts, etc.) CSEA members that have EBF benefits are eligible based on the criteria set forth in their unit's CBA.

How do I know what plans I have?

You can always refer to your contract or check with your employer, but we would suggest starting with our website at cseabf.com. You can use our Benefits Search tool or log onto our Member Portal. Our Member Portal is safe and easy to use and allows members to quickly review what plans they have and who is eligible for coverage.

Do I have to use a participating provider?

While we encourage you and your family to use a participating provider to get the most value out of your benefits, you do not have to. If you have one of our dental plans, you may use any dentist you would like. Non-participating dentists will balance bill you for the difference

between our plan allowances and their service charge. If you have one of our vision plans and use a non-participating provider, we pay based on an indemnity schedule. Your benefits will be drastically reduced if used at an out-of-network vision provider.

How can I find a participating provider?

You can search for dental and vision providers using a desktop computer or a smartphone by visiting our website at cseabf.com. You can search by zip, city, state, or provider name.

What is my EBF ID?

Your EBF ID is a unique number assigned to you and your family to use with your EBF benefits. It is different from your CSEA member number, your health insurance ID, and your NYS Employee ID. You can look up your EBF ID by visiting our website and selecting the Member Portal. Once registered and logged in, you can view, print or even order a new set of benefit cards.

How do I contact the EBF with questions?

Call 1-800-323-2732 Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. You can also connect with us using our LiveChat feature from our website and see what we are up to on Facebook and Instagram.



Empire Plan claims deadline approaches for calendar year 2019

Empire Plan enrollees have until April 30, 2020 (120 days after the end of the calendar year) to submit medical expenses incurred during the 2019 plan year.

Network providers/pharmacies will submit claims directly to the appropriate insurance carrier on your behalf when provided with all necessary information.

If you have a non-network claim submission, make sure you complete the requested subscriber information on the appropriate claim form, include the original billing or receipt (if requested), sign and return the claim form.

Claim submission for Empire Plan Basic Medical Program, the Home Care Advocacy Program (HCAP) and for non-network physical therapy or chiropractic services:

United HealthCare

P.O. Box 1600

Kingston, N.Y. 12402-1600

Claims submission fax: 845-336-7716

Online: <https://nyrmo.optummessenger.com/public/opensubmit>

Claim submission for Empire Plan non-network inpatient or outpatient hospital services:

Empire Blue Cross

NYS Service Center

P.O. Box 1407, Church Street Station

New York, NY 10008-1407

Claims submission fax: 888-367-9788

Online: www.empireblue.com/forms

Claim submission for Empire Plan non-network mental health and substance abuse services:

Beacon Health Options, Inc.
P.O. Box 1850

Hicksville, NY 11802

Claims submission fax: 855-378-8309
Online: www.achievesolutions.net/empireplan

Claim submission for Empire Plan prescriptions filled at non-participating pharmacies or at participating pharmacies without using your New York Government Employee Benefit Card use:

CVS Caremark

P.O. Box 52136

Phoenix, AZ 85072-2136

Please contact the Empire Plan at 1-877-7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) with additional questions about claim submissions or to obtain claim forms.



Health Insurance

CSEA's statewide college scholarships are available!

Graduating high school seniors who are dependents of CSEA active members are eligible to apply for and win one of our union's statewide college scholarships.

"This [CSEA scholarships] lightens our family's financial burden, which allows my daughter to focus on her main goal, which is to receive a college education. I am proud to be a CSEA member."

— Orlando Romano, cleaner, Farmingdale Union Free School District, whose daughter, Krisia Romano, received a 2019 Irving Flaumenbaum Memorial Scholarship



Application deadline extended to June 1

The 2020 application is available at cseany.org

**Please do not use applications from previous years. Using an older application will disqualify a candidate.*

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know?

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*limit of 6

‘Nassau needs NUMC:’ Members fighting for public hospital

EAST MEADOW — As health care workers in hospitals are currently battling to save lives due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, public hospital workers in Long Island are fighting to make sure their services aren’t reduced by a risky privatization scheme.

Our CSEA Nassau University Medical Center Unit is fighting to preserve services at the public hospital and neighboring public nursing home, as a private sector health care provider is trying to take over the facility and cut services.

The private sector Northwell Health, the largest health care provider on Long Island, entered into a partnership with NUMC in 2018 to address fiscal issues at the public hospital. Northwell is seeking to cut services at NUMC, which serves as a ‘safety net’ facility for patients who may be on Medicare, Medicaid or lack insurance.

“Where are our uninsured and underinsured residents supposed to go?” said Nassau County Local President Ron Gurrieri. “I’d like to sit

down with hospital administrators to discuss effective ways to subsidize hospital operating costs so that our members, and the general public, won’t be negatively impacted.”

A ‘monopoly’

While our members’ contract with NUMC includes a no-layoff clause, the cuts would still lead to job losses because there will be fewer units to staff and fewer patients to serve.

Unit members are also on guard due to the county’s fiscal control board, Nassau Interim Finance Authority requesting financial information about hospital spending, including union members’ salaries.

“Northwell is on its way to becoming a monopoly in this area,” said NUMC Unit President Lynne Kramer. “NUMC is really the only hospital that is out there by itself. It’s a scary time for us.”

NUMC has faced fiscal difficulties in recent years that have made providing services more difficult.

“A primary example are the cuts that NUMC made to our ambulance budget,” said Kramer. “When NUMC



CSEA Nassau County Local President Ron Gurrieri and Nassau University Medical Center Unit President Lynne Kramer discuss important issues with members.



CSEA Nassau University Medical Center Unit members gather for a rally before a hospital board meeting.

has an influx of people who need to be transported, we have to rely on Northwell Health to transport patients when we run out of ambulances.”

NUMC also has psychiatric, burn and detox units, services that many other local hospitals do not provide.

“If this hospital starts eliminating services, community members will have to start going to surrounding hospitals where they will not be helped if they can’t afford to pay,” said Kramer. “I believe people should be taken care of regardless of whether they have a big bank account or not. If anyone on the hospital board, or any of the legislators, actually believed in our mission to help everyone in need of medical care, they would be fighting as hard as we are to keep this hospital open.”

NUMC a vital hospital

Our members are also concerned about cutting services at a hospital that is centrally located between Nassau County’s north and south shores. If emergency workers were forced to bypass NUMC for a more distant hospital, the extra minutes could be devastating.

As an increasing number of people become infected by COVID-19, NUMC’s role as a safety net hospital is more important than ever.

Our members are also concerned about a lack of transparency from the NUMC hospital board, which began holding meetings in a far smaller conference room than previous meeting locations. After a CSEA rally that drew local press, the

board also began issuing tickets to limit attendance at their meetings.

Fighting back

CSEA members are fighting to preserve hospital services, getting our message out on social media, television and newspapers.

Unit members are also holding rallies before hospital board meetings, at which they wear red t-shirts with a hashtag that reads, “#NassauNeedsNUMC.” The same slogan is being used for pins, social media and other forms of collateral to raise awareness about the threat to hospital services.

“I’ve been encouraging our members to wear the t-shirts on their off time,” said Kramer. “I can’t tell you how many people have asked me about my shirt and about articles they’ve seen in local papers. I use the conversation as an opportunity to encourage people to join us at rallies and hospital board meetings.”

In addition to regular unit meetings, our NUMC Unit also staffs a table each month at hospital’s cafeteria to update members on the latest union news.

Through it all, our members are seeing why union membership is so important.

“Our members are seeing how much unions do for you,” said Kramer. “If we didn’t have a strong, fighting union in place, it would be over for us already. It’s not good enough to just be a member. In order to effect change, you have to be a part of the fight for our future.”

— Wendi Bowie

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For assistance in accessing the application in your area call: 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1359.

All applications must be downloaded and mailed in.

*Open enrollment periods are Jan. 1-14, April 1-14, July 1-14 and Oct. 1-14

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