

Email update 3/13/2020

Sisters and Brothers --

With the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Pennsylvania, we face rapidly changing and sometimes frightening times. We wanted to get this update out to let you know what we've been doing as a union to advocate for our members and the public in the face of this pandemic.

First, to define our position, we are urging employers to take affirmative, fact-driven action to implement policies to combat COVID-19 as soon as possible. We will continue to partner with employers and urge them to take the best actions to combat the spread of COVID-19. That said, they need to do so collaboratively with us and without undermining the rights of our members. If employers are taking no action, our position is they need to do something -- *now*.

We want employers to rely on the advice of medical experts in crafting policies -- including limiting exposure contact and office foot traffic, implementing remote working opportunities, and shutting down operations if the situation dictates it. The safety of our members and the public is of utmost importance.

With that said, the work of many of our members is paramount in maintaining public safety. Local 668 members are considered essential staff and may be required to report to their worksite during the length of this pandemic. No matter what, we need your employer to limit your exposure to the virus as much as possible, while we continue to work to protect the public to our fullest capability.

Throughout the week, we've been speaking with the Governor's Office along with state and local agencies to gather information, coordinate responses, and advocate for improvements whenever possible. We support many of the steps taken to protect the livelihood of workers in quarantine and the shutdown of operations in counties where people are most at risk. We do believe, however, that much more will need to be done.

Organizationally, we submitted correspondence to every workplace we represent that urged employers to take action and included a formal demand to bargain over anything that may change your terms and conditions of employment at the workplace. We're going to do our best to work with employers to do as much as they can, but we also want to ensure your rights are not undermined in a time of vulnerability.

As a union, we also drastically changed our internal operating procedures. We're asking staff to limit travel to your workplaces and work from home when possible to mitigate any potential spreading of COVID-19. We're moving as many of our in-person meetings as possible to video and telephone conferencing, and we're going to continue to be proactive with our in-house policies.

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We ask that you please remain calm but vigilant. Please follow the Department of Health's guidance which includes continuing to wash your hands, avoiding touching your face, and coughing/sneezing into your elbow or tissue. If you think you may have been exposed to the virus, or if someone you know may have been exposed, we urge you to contact your general physician or the PA Department of Health immediately: **1-877-PA-HEALTH** (1-877-724-3258).

We want to take a moment to thank all of our member leaders and staff who have been advocating for our members and the public this week in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. SEIU Local 668 members have been fighting for the health and safety of our members across the Commonwealth. We thank you for your efforts and please, if you know a member-leader who has risen above and beyond in recent days, take a moment to thank them as well.

We will continue to provide updates to our members as this ongoing situation evolves. During this time, please be patient with our staff, your management and HR reps, and your community. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please email us at Local668@seiu668.org.

In Solidarity—

Steve Catanese, President SEIU Local 668

PA-Specific Updates:

www.health.pa.gov

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

Nationwide Updates:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

*If you or anyone you know have questions or suspect exposure, please call the PA Department of Health: **1-877-PA-HEALTH** (1-877-724-3258)*