

DOC Email Update_4.1.2020

Good evening--

Earlier this afternoon, this [open letter to DOC officials](#) was released on behalf of SEIU Local 668 members working in SCIs. We're calling on Secretary Wetzel to implement uniform use of AWS in all facilities, and are asking DOC management to remove the authority of superintendents to decide whether or not a worker should be allowed to work an alternate schedule.

It's imperative, during this ongoing COVID-19 crisis, that our members are able to care for themselves and their families as best they can. Implementing alternative work schedules will allow our members to better-handle childcare issues because of statewide school and daycare closures. Additional information on AWS as well as a Call to Action for all members is below.

A number of other SCI-specific updates have also been released to our statewide [Corrections Committee](#)—if you have any questions or need additional information, please send an email to Local668@seiu668.org, reach out to your Shop Steward or [Committee Rep](#), or contact your Business Agent.

Thank you and have a good evening---

SEIU Local 668 Communications Team

AWS: Our Corrections Committee, staff, and officers were told that AWS agreements are being left up to each SCI. That means an individual SCI can deny AWS if the superintendent decides they don't want to do it. We've sent an open letter to Secretary Wetzel calling for this decision to be reversed. We are also implementing a call to action as follows:

Call to Action: Our members in State Correctional Institutions need additional assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic since they're on the frontlines, dealing with inmates. We're asking all of our members to please reach out to your local legislator—let them know that you need better access to personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as uniformity when it comes to using and implementing an Alternative Work Schedule. Your House and Senate representatives need to understand that each SCI is making its own rules, and it means emergency responders inside the facilities are left to handle childcare emergencies on their own.

Find your Legislator Here: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/>

Tips when Speaking with Legislators:

-- Identify yourself as their constituent and provide your first name. Let them know which SCI you work at.

-- Share your concerns. Let your legislators know you're worried about PPE and lack of uniformity in using AWS and how it would directly impact you if you were exposed at work or if you brought the virus home. Also, share if you have specific child care needs now that all schools are closed.

-- Ask for assistance. Ask them to have the Department of Health provide additional PPE for SCI workers. Ask them to put pressure on DOC to make sure all SCIs are implementing

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Alternative Work Schedules so that emergency personnel, like our members, can still perform their essential duties while taking care of their families at home.

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in SCIs: One inmate at Phoenix and one staff person at Waymart have been tested and confirmed positive for COVID-19 as of 5PM today.

Masks: The DOC is not eliminating masks -- this is a rumor. The department issued all employees a cloth mask (which our Committee Members, Business Agents, and Statewide Officers all recognize to be inadequate at best) and will be issuing each employee two more (for a total of three). This is because of the complaints that the masks get moist and dirty quickly. All employees were told that if they do not want to use the masks they are able to bring in their own. At this time, only Medical, Transport, staff working in reception, and Discharge (R&D) will be issued N95 masks.

Quarantine vs. Lockdown: The DOC will be breaking inmates into groups of no more than eight. Inmates will still get phone calls and virtual visits and out of cell time, but in their group of eight. Inmates will be assigned a specific group they must stay with that group. Groups will not be mixed. When one group comes out for out-of-cell time and then goes back in, areas are cleaned before the next group comes out. Meals will be served on the block. No inmates will be working in the kitchen. Staff will be used to help make the meals. *If you find that your SCI is not abiding by these new directives, please reach out to your Shop Steward and Business Agent immediately.*

Useful Links:

SEIU 668 COVID-19 Updates

<http://www.seiu668.org/covid19/>

PA Department of Health Updates

<https://www.health.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Update Personal Contact Info to Receive Emails from SEIU 668

<http://bit.ly/contactinfo668>

Join the SEIU 668: Together We Rise! Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SEIU668TogetherWeRise/>