

The Communicator

Keep
inspiring.

Keep
loving.

Keep
helping.

Keep
leading.

Keep
being PEF.



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The President's Message

By WAYNE SPENCE



PEF proud to support your outstanding service

As each week goes by, I find more and more reasons to be take pride in the work PEF members do and to be humbled by the personal sacrifices so many of you are making during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stories of heroism, strength, commitment and compassion are the norm, not the exception, and your efforts to keep the state running and New Yorkers safe has not gone unnoticed. The COVID-19 pandemic is shining a light on what we always knew to be true, and never has the important work you do every day been more clear.

For the past several weeks, we have focused on ensuring that if you must leave your home and go to work, that your safety is not jeopardized. Once we were able to get the state to agree to allow workers to wear their own masks, we secured and distributed thousands of masks and face shields to worksites around the state. And while we believe it is the employer's responsibility to provide protective equipment, we stepped in when it became evident that our members were in need of masks to remain safe.

As a result of many, many communications with state commissioners and staff at the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER), we have been able to effect some change that has resulted in safer working conditions for our members and the people we serve.

Now, as the governor begins to think in earnest about re-opening the state, we are taking steps to ensure that any return to the workplace is done with our members' safety as the number one priority.

We began conversations with Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul and impressed upon her the importance of our input in any re-opening plan. We expressed our concerns about how to achieve social distancing within workplaces, the need for public health tools to prevent the spread or outbreaks of the virus, the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) to do our jobs safely and a re-imagining of work so that many of you who have successfully telecommuted during this time may continue to do so.

In fact, we are working with GOER right now to negotiate continuances of COVID-19 agreements (such as [telecommuting](#) and mandatory PPE) that are set to expire in July.

Finally, I offer you my deepest and heartfelt thanks and gratitude for all you do each and every day. It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. I'll let this video speak for itself:



Importance of safe nurse staffing levels highlighted during COVID pandemic: Ignoring calls for safe staffing, state leaves hospitals unprepared

By KATE MOSTACCIO

Each year, PEF nurses spend a day lobbying at the State Capitol for the same thing – safe staffing levels. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the extraordinary increase in patient loads across the state, the importance of safe and adequate staffing levels is glaring.

“Nursing shortages is of itself a ‘pandemic,’” said Joan Rosegreen, an ER nurse at SUNY Downstate Medical Center and a member of PEF’s Nurses Committee. “I have testified at the Department of Health on the importance of nurse-patient ratio and providing more staff but the usual response is nothing is done to alleviate nurse patient ratio issues which would preserve our nursing staff so that they can better serve their patients.

“When the COVID crisis came around all nursing staff were told they will be mandated to work four extra shifts every 13-day schedule,” she said. “They had no choice in the days they would have to work and despite having all the agency nurses they are still expected to show up for their mandated shift in addition to their regular shifts. Most nurses were given a schedule to work four days with one day off and back to work for day five.”

PEF nurses are dedicated to the health and safety of their patients. Being on the frontlines of this pandemic, treating a heavy load of patients, has taken its toll on the nurses. Something Rosegreen has seen firsthand.

“At the outset of the crisis I was taking care of a maximum of 10 to 12 patients at a time and this was the new normal for all the nurses in the Emergency Department,” Rosegreen said. “We were given patients and they were dying within an hour or less of arrival while others would expire within 2 to 4 hours of admissions and as soon as they would die another patient waiting in line would replace them. Some would come in with CPR in progress and die within minutes of arrival. Others would be ‘dead on arrival’. This type of activity has been overwhelming, depressing and traumatic for the nurses.”

To handle the influx of patients, the hospital increased the staff by hiring temporary agency nurses from other states and they are being paid at higher salary rates -- double the rate of PEF nurses. With this temporary “fix” in place, “the question arises ‘what is going to happen when this COVID crisis is over and the agency nurses leave?’” said Rosegreen. “Of course we all hear the chorus response back to business as usual, short staff. The issue surrounding nursing shortages will not be resolved because it’s all about money.”

Bringing in agency hires during a crisis is a Bandaid, not a solution.

“Being a state facility the nurses know that the salary will be low and the volume of work will increase and they are expected to perform without adequate staffing,” Rosegreen said. “During the month of April when the volume of patients was increasing and we were in the middle of the crisis we received some extra help but it was always consistent throughout the hospital. If a nurse became ill due to this pandemic there would be no one to replace that nurse because there were just not any extra nurses available to call.

“A large percentage of our nursing staff have been affected by this COVID virus and with staff out it means working with less staff,” she said. “During this crisis we appreciate the extra help when it’s given but the underlying issue of inadequate staffing will be there once this is over and the agency nurses contracts are over and we get back to our regular routine.” PEF’s nursing coordinator, Gabriel Kristal, said the impact of safe staffing on patient care is well documented.

“Studies have shown over and over again that patient care is improved and mortality rates decline when there is proper staffing,” Kristal said. “All of the professional associations have agreed. Costs actually go down as a result of safe staffing.”

Despite lobbying efforts and study evidence, the levels haven’t changed. A look at PEF’s membership numbers show full time equivalent nurses at 10,456 in 2010, 10,111 in 2015 and currently 10,386.



Why have the numbers remained similar despite lobbying? "Hospital administrators have taken a short sighted approach to wanting to be able to maintain status quo," Kristal said. "This year, we've seen how important nurses are while we're enduring a national health care crisis. For many nurses in many hospitals there is a health care crisis every day and they are faced with not being able to properly care for the patients they receive."

COVID-19 has only exacerbated the problem.

"When we don't have adequate staffing levels, we've seen nurse infections increase and nurses not having time to properly put on PPE," Kristal said. "The risk to both caregivers and patients is increased."

Rosegreen highlighted the risk.

"Being at the frontline to receive the patients as they arrive by EMS has not been easy for the nurses," she said. "There is always that question in the back of our minds and the fear of uncertainty and of infecting our families."

She believes nurses will need emotional support and lots of therapy after the traumatic experience of COVID-19. She fears the state will likely lose nurses to retirement or to more attractive salaries being offered by private institutions. Still, Rosegreen remains hopeful.

"I believe and hope that the Nurse Patient Ratio Act will become law so that we can have better staffing which will allow us to provide the level of care the patients need as well as decrease the amount of injuries among nurses, promote wellness and have a more healthy and productive staff," she said.



**Safe staffing could have saved
so many more lives...
access to proper PPE still can.**

Lending a helping hand: SUNY Upstate nurses aid Stony Brook with COVID response

By KATE MOSTACCIO

When the chief nursing officer at SUNY Upstate University Hospital sent out a call for volunteers to assist nursing staff at Long Island's Stony Brook University Hospital with overflowing COVID-19 units, PEF member nurses stepped up and answered.

Among the volunteers from Upstate were Kathy Sukhorukov and Suzanne Buck.

Buck, a PEF nurse since 1994, heard the hospital was looking for volunteers to help on Long Island and offered her services for the second round of volunteers.

"I volunteered because I felt like I needed to help the nurses and these patients," Buck said. "I have been in nursing for almost 35 years. I felt very confident that I could go down and help them. It was really an experience I will never forget." When they arrived at Stony Brook, Buck and the group of volunteers were greeted by hundreds of staff members cheering and holding signs.

"It was an amazing reception," she said. "It was just so humbling. They were lovely. They really opened their hearts to us. It was just amazing."

Buck was assigned to a med-surg floor where the nursing staff did not have critical care experience and she was able to provide skills the patients needed.

"Being in emergency medicine for so many years I had all the critical care experience," Buck said. "I watched over other med-surg nurses. There are certain meds that they are not certified to administer. I would have 6 to 8 patients and have a couple med-surg nurses under me. I tried to take more than they would. It was very overwhelming, these patients were so sick." The camaraderie between the Upstate and the Stony Brook nurses was immediate.

"I felt as soon as we got there we really connected with these nurses," Buck said. "They greeted us with open arms. I was very nervous, I didn't know what to expect, but they never just said, 'You're on your own.'"



"It was so surreal. It felt like I was walking into a war zone," she said. "When I saw all these patients I could not understand what this virus was doing. It is scary how it affected so many people down there. Up here in Syracuse we hardly were touched."

The level of illness took Buck by surprise.

"These patients were really, really sick," she said. "I was very surprised how sick they were and how they were not recovering."

During her time at Stony Brook, Buck said she felt well protected and there was adequate PPE for all the staff.

"I would do it again. It was such a humbling experience," she said.

The drive to help other nurses facing extreme patient load also led Kathy Sukhorukov to volunteer for the third wave of nurses from Upstate to travel to Stony Brook.

"I just wanted to go down and help out considering Syracuse wasn't hit very hard," she said. "They're overwhelmed. Patients are very sick. They are doing the best they can with

the resources and staff they have available. Considering the pandemic, I think they've done a very good job."

The welcome for the third wave of nurses was as excited as for the first, Sukhorukov said.

"Our welcome was pretty grand," she said. "They were out front cheering and we had a police escort into the hospital. Everyone seemed grateful we were there. It seemed like the gratefulness never stopped. They were happy to see any group that came down."

Sukhorukov has been with Upstate for two and a half years, working in the Cardiac Stepdown Unit and most recently as a cardio-pulmonary ICU nurse.

"It has been a pretty incredible experience," Sukhorukov said. "I was on 11 South. That was the first COVID ICU that they created at Stony Brook."

She said many of the staff on the unit have some ICU experience but not all of them have extensive ICU skills. Still, she said the nurses have been well prepared. "Everyone has been helpful pitching in and making sure all the patients get the care they need," she said.

Sukhorukov's family was incredibly supportive and the experience life-changing.

"I think it was a wonderful experience," she said. "I definitely think this is a time hopefully we don't ever have to see again. Overall, the way hospitals have responded and how hospitals are sending groups of nurses to severely hit areas, it seems like people like helping each other. I'm glad Stony Brook gave us a warm welcome and glad Upstate let us go down and help out."

The experience was humbling and surreal for Upstate nurses – but for Stony Brook nurses, their fellow PEF members coming to their aid in a time of crisis was truly appreciated and friendships were forged.

"I had a great experience with it on my unit," said PEF nurse Kathleen Capps, who works on 18North at Stony Brook. "The hospital made us one of the first COVID+ units."

The 18North unit is made up of med-surg nurses and Capps said the needs of COVID patients surpassed the qualifications those nurses had.

"We needed intermediate care and ICU nurses to supplement our nurses," she said. "We got three of them and we got very, very close to the nurses who worked with us for two weeks. They were leaders for us and taught us a lot."

"They became part of our family," she said. "We keep in touch with them. It was just an amazing experience all around."

In all her years as a nurse, COVID has provided the most challenges.

"I've been a nurse at Stony Brook for 21 years and we've never had, that I can recall, something so catastrophic that we've needed other nurses to come," she said. "We had shortages around 11 or 12 years ago but they just hired agency nurses."

"This was just a really beautiful thing the way these people came out of their homes and stayed in hotels," she said. "It really is a beautiful thing all around. We had such a good experience the whole thing is terrific."

Capps said the level of patient need has been taxing on the nurses.

"It's been very challenging emotionally for the staff because the symptoms of COVID are generally respiratory related," she said. "We are watching people have trouble breathing and get so bad they have to be intubated."

Having the support of Upstate nurses boosted morale at Stony Brook.

"When they arrived, it ended up making us feel valued," Capps said. "They were really looking at what can we do to help these nurses? They're going to drown if we don't get them help."

When the pandemic is over and the state reopens, the friendships that have risen from the shared experiences will continue.

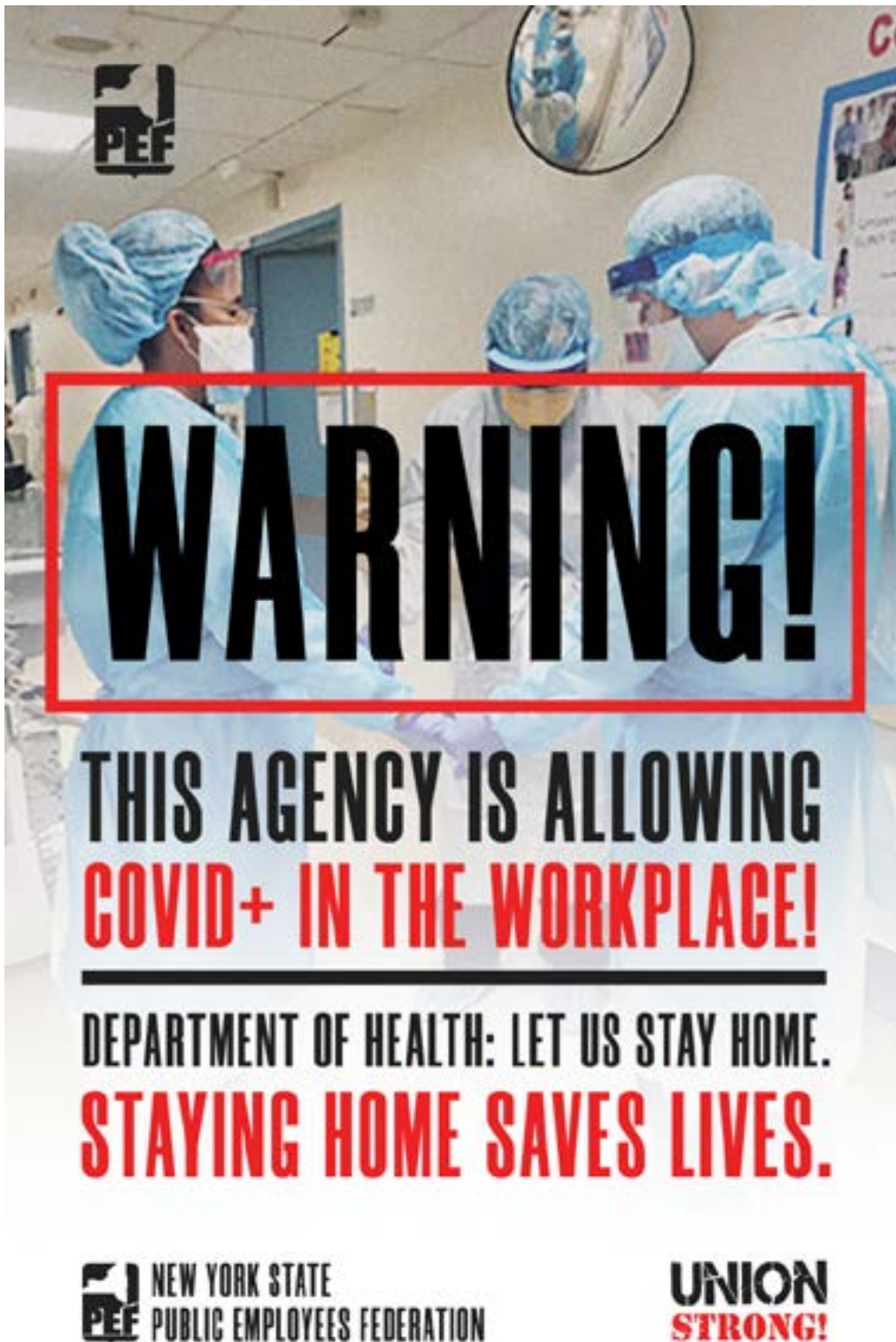
"We're going to meet these nurses to go to a Broadway play when this is all over and things open up," Capps said.

2020 PEF Nurses ZOOM Forum

**Wednesday, May 27, 2020
10AM and 8PM**

Email GKristal@pef.org to register.

**The nurses, united, can never
be defeated. Sign up today!**



**More to come...
and Watch for upcoming story**

Showing appreciation, supporting those on the frontlines

By KATE MOSTACCIO

For some people, whether they are PEF members themselves or someone who has been coming in contact with PEF members, being idle just isn't in their blood.

The staff at the Homewood Suites by Hilton in East Syracuse went above and beyond providing a place to stay for some PEF nurses. The general manager, Roberta Andrews, decided go one step further and sew and personalize masks for her guests working on the frontlines in health care.

"We want to appreciate those who are truly essential," said Andrews. "It's just a little thing. Just something to let them know they are being loved and thought of and we appreciate them."

Andrews, faced with low occupancy, has had to lay off staff. She moved into the hotel temporarily and brought her sewing and Cricut machines with her to pass the time. Building on Hilton's current motto of "Honoring those bringing light and warmth to a world in need," she is making her guests' stays a little brighter. The personalized gifts are left in guest rooms for privacy.

"It's hard to be away from your family," she said. "We are doing anything we can to help their stay and let them relax in a safe environment."

PEF has been working with hotels to put up members who are protecting vulnerable family by staying away or who are too tired after long shifts to return to their house. If you would like to donate to this cause, [click here](#).

PEF member Tracy Fitzgerald, a legal assistant, has been working from home and wanted to do something more for her fellow members on the frontlines.

"When we went to working remotely I felt there wasn't anything I could do to help," she said. "I was hearing people needed masks. I didn't have a sewing machine but I do sew by hand. I had to use scrap fabric and I started making masks to keep busy and do something to be constructive." Fitzgerald made masks for herself and her family, but also mailed a number of masks to PEF for distribution to whoever needed them.

"We're all home which is great for us," she said. "But I wanted to help in the ways that I could. There are a lot of people who couldn't stop working or work remotely."



Members of Division 167 from the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities also dusted off their sewing skills and began to make masks for coworkers.

"Some of our RNs were making masks for themselves and individuals in the homes they serve," said Council Leader Stephanie McLean-Beathley. "We've had family members make masks. We had the masks that PEF sent to us. Early on we made a commitment to do what we could to try to keep our members safe. That's how the masks started going. Initially there weren't enough available at worksites." McLean-Beathley said her members began making the masks to protect their members until management was able to secure enough masks.

"We started protecting members on our own so management was able to get their order together so they could fully equip the group homes that we serve," she said. "We are all just trying to keep everybody protected."

"In the beginning it was to protect themselves and the people they work with. The good thing about cloth masks is that they are washable and reusable," she said. "They have been getting a lot of wear. We have plenty of PPE now at OPWDD and OMH but if something were to happen again those would be the first things people can go back to."



PEF secures masks for members in need when state falls short

By KATE MOSTACCIO

New Yorkers are required to wear masks in public when social distancing is not possible. Masks are on everyone's minds. But, for frontline workers and PEF members deemed essential – masks have been hard to come by.

"PEF has made it a priority to source masks for our members," said President Wayne Spence. "We have reached out to industry contacts and have been working tirelessly to obtain KN95 and surgical masks for our members on the frontlines of this pandemic."

Finding masks for members

PEF Political Director Leah Gonzalez, a former staff member at 1199SEIU, used contacts she has at the Greater New York Hospital Association to get the ball rolling on masks for PEF members in New York City and other hard-hit locations at the epicenter of the pandemic.

"This was born out of trying to make sure our nurses at SUNY Downstate had enough PPE," she said. "I spoke to contacts at the Greater New York Hospital association, a big part of the governor's PPE supply chain for the state. They are very well connected."

When Gonzalez told the association what sort of work PEF members do, they were immediately on board to help.

"They were so gracious," she said. "They said, 'We thank them for their service and they deserve to be protected.' They were able to get us out a shipment, part of the state PPE pipeline, and were able to parcel out 6,400 masks as a donation."

The disbursement of PPE is a daunting undertaking but Gonzalez said her contacts knew the process.

"It was such a huge production and they were doing such an amazing job," she said. "The president of the association has been in some of the governor's briefings helping to coordinate the hospital response in the beginning weeks. Because they represent major hospitals they have all those contracts with manufacturers."

Since the original donation, Gonzalez said they have received an additional 26,400 class 2 surgical masks and 3,000 KN95 masks.

A New York City company, Quantum Visual Imaging, shifted gears from its usual production of banners and other visual graphics, and has provided PEF with 1,200 face shields for distribution, Gonzalez said. The company joined up with other independent fabricators and is accepting donations to enable them to produce face gear and PPE for healthcare workers.

PEF Chief of Staff Chris Leo drove downstate last week to pick up a batch of face shields, then drove back upstate and delivered them to Region 7 OPWDD facilities. The shields were distributed to members involved in direct patient care.

"It has been difficult to obtain face shields but we felt these were vital and necessary equipment for our members in these direct care positions," said President Spence.

Below is a sampling of members who received and distributed masks to their coworkers. To see more, visit PEF's Facebook page where photos continue to be added.



Getting masks to those at the epicenter

Ricardo Cruz, PEF's Downstate Director of Field Services, worked out in-person distribution to downstate members as part of what he called, "Operation PEF Cares."

"We endeavored on a mission to deliver 6,000+ surgical masks to members in New York City, Long Island and Westchester who needed them most to protect themselves while working against the COVID-19 virus," Cruz said.

He praised downstate field representatives for stepping up to the task of distributing masks.

"This couldn't have been accomplished without you," he said. "Because of your hard work and dedication thousands of members that were working without masks, potentially exposing themselves and their family to COVID-19, today woke up with a sigh of relief because they have masks to protect themselves."

Cruz said when he put out a call for assistance to hand out masks, the downstate staff all volunteered without hesitation.

"Since the beginning of this pandemic, the staff has been working 10 to 15-hour days," he said. "I see them answering calls and emails starting at 7 a.m. They have been really responsive to the members and have been fighting to make

sure the members get the PPE they deserve. They should be commended."

Gonzalez also praised the field reps. "They were all so happy to have participated in it. That made my week. It felt really good," she said.

Field Reps Priscilla Marco, Robert Wright, Bradley Kolb, George Fernandez and Erin Morales took to the streets to bring masks to members in need.

Distribution efforts began when Cruz picked up the donated masks at a warehouse in New Jersey and drove them to Fort Tryon Park in Manhattan where the field reps lined up, one car after another, to receive their allotment for delivery.

"Leah deserves a lot of the credit because she, through her prior relationship and connections, was able to get these," Cruz said. "She reached out to me and I had to drive all the way down to New Jersey to get them. I brought them to my home and my family and I broke them up. We had a list to work off. The first batch of 6,400 mostly went to OMH facilities in New York City and Long Island. In addition to OMH, some went to parole offices in New Rochelle, New York City and Long Island."

Cruz, who was a PEF member as a parole officer, said this experience has been eye opening. "As a member, I never realized how much they [PEF staff] do," he said. "I have a new appreciation for staff."

The members receiving the masks were pleasantly surprised by the appearance of staff bearing masks.

"They were all surprised. This wasn't planned way in advance," Cruz said. "We weren't sure when we were going to get them. We had no time to let them know. When we were on our way to the location, we called them. They were of course ecstatic. Some of these places had none. Others were working with what was issued and what was issued was being controlled. They couldn't be happier."



Rockland Psychiatric Center

At Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC), where there are 65 COVID-19+ cases and 12 deaths among patients, and where staff lost a CSEA member to the virus, Executive Board member and Steward Carl Ankrah said the masks from PEF were greatly appreciated.

"There were badly needed," he said. "Like most facilities, the facility did not take the issue seriously and at the outset of this, they were working without masks, even surgical masks." That has changed as the virus spread like wildfire in New York City and the surrounding counties. "Now everybody is getting the N95s on inpatient wards but not outpatient."

Ankrah said the PEF supplies have been directed toward those members working in outpatient programs. "They aren't getting the N95s," he said. "The outpatient staff are really grateful that PEF is giving out these masks."

The virus has hit the facility hard over the last months.

"We had many PEF members out," he said. "Some tested positive. They are gradually coming back but the facility was really, really struggling with staff. Nurses were being mandated back to back. These masks are extremely helpful. In outpatient, clients are coming in for injections so you may have clients who may have contact with COVID. It's important that we all protect ourselves."

RPC has received two batches of 750 masks, Ankrah said. He also recently delivered masks to a clinic in Yonkers. "They were very appreciative that PEF brought masks for them," he said.



Creedmoor Psychiatric Center

In March, employees at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center learned there was a COVID+ case among staff. Council Leader Michele Solokski immediately went into action, contacting administration and asking about the plan to protect members working on inpatient units.

Despite being told there was a plan, Solokski says there was still concern for her members, especially the habilitation specialists who were still working with clients but didn't have any proper PPE. She reached out to PEF for assistance and received masks and N95s to distribute to her members.

"Wayne said, 'Let me know if our members are still being put in harms way,'" she said. "My biggest concern is for our rehab staff. Just today they started to get fit testing. I just got the white masks and I'm giving everyone two at a time."

The masks give members more than just an added layer of safety.

"I think because this is not just a physical issue it's mental and psychological warfare to go into a building where you know people are sick," she said. "I think PEF giving us masks and resources to help our members, this is what we need. It's nice to know we have a union to back us up, to help us out, to keep ourselves healthy."

"We are appreciative we were offered these things. The facility itself wasn't doing anything. I've been all over the building," Solokski said. "PEF has made a very big difference in terms of the morale. If they can't get a mask from central nursing, they can get it here."

Queens Parole Office

For Queens parole officers, having to continue entering hotspot locations like Riker's Island and Bellevue is frightening and is magnified by their lack of adequate PPE and sick time.

Unlike other law enforcement agencies with unlimited sick pay, PEF parole officers who are being hit by COVID-19 are facing returning to work when their sick days run out or go without pay, said Parole Officer and Division 236 Treasurer Yolanda Pittman..

"We come off the books in five days, especially if you don't have Aflac or short-term disability," she said.

As someone with health conditions that put her at greater risk for COVID-19, the increased chance of infection that comes with her job is highly troubling for Pittman. She took it upon herself to gather masks and gloves to distribute to her fellow members and was grateful when the union was able to secure some, too.

"It really helped when PEF came through because we got the masks and little hand sanitizers," Pittman said.

Her members had many reactions to getting the donations.

"Some said, 'Thank you, anything is better than nothing. Or, 'How come my employer didn't have them for us?' We're willing to work, at least give us what we need." She said. "I think overall everybody appreciated it. It definitely made a difference. Thanks to President Spence, he is out there doing everything he can do."

Kingsboro Psychiatric Center and Brooklyn Children's Psychiatric Center

PEF Division 252 Assistant Council Leader Cheryl Jefferson received masks from PEF and began distributing them to her members, as well as to members at Brooklyn Children's PC.

"So far they have been very appreciative yet surprised," Jefferson said. "They have also been asking about PEF being able to provide hand sanitizer due to the limited supply in the facility."

Jefferson said the situation at their facility is impacting members strongly.

"The morale is low, most are fearful of still getting sick, being overwhelmed with limited profound support and guidance from their department heads," she said.



New York City Children's Center

Cases of COVID-19 have hit the New York City Children's Center and staff says the situation has been dire.

"Our day treatment program works closely with the Department of Education, who is housed in our NYS facility. Early last month there were rumors that some of their members had tested positive," said Division 188 Council Leader Maxine Breeden.

Administration dismissed the talk as rumor, but Breeden said PEF members were soon infected.

"The entire Intensive Day Treatment staff were infected, a total of nine staff in one cluster," she said. "To this day, there continues to be limited amount of masks being given on a daily basis and staff are told to return their soiled mask in order to get a replacement."

What PEF was able to provide bolstered their access.

"The masks PEF was able to provide gave the staff another outlet for obtaining them," she said.

Branching out across the state

PEF's Director of Organizing, Dan Carpenter, worked with PEF staff member Jessica Carpenter to coordinate distribution and create a spreadsheet of locations and contacts.

"We have worked with local leaders across the state to identify hotspots and to work on coordinating delivery," Carpenter said. So far that has included 5,500 N95 and close to 14,000 surgical masks, all donated, he said.

"We mailed out many to OPWDD and OMH facilities across upstate New York," Carpenter said. "As we have been hearing in local press reports, some of the mental health institutions have been dubbed the new nursing homes. It has been a priority that our members stay safe and be able to keep up New York standards."

Staying in touch with PEF members has been an added bonus to this project.

"It's been great to touch base with these leaders during this crisis," Carpenter said. "However some of the stories they share are heart wrenching about the current PPE conditions within state facilities."

Region 2

Region 2 Coordinator Andrew Puleo spent the better part of a week traveling to various locations around his region to deliver masks to stewards, treasurers and council leaders from divisions that had reached out and asked for masks.

"Everyone was happy to see that PEF was taking an interest in their wellbeing," Puleo said. "I think they were happy to see me. They were welcoming. And it was very well received that they were personally delivered."

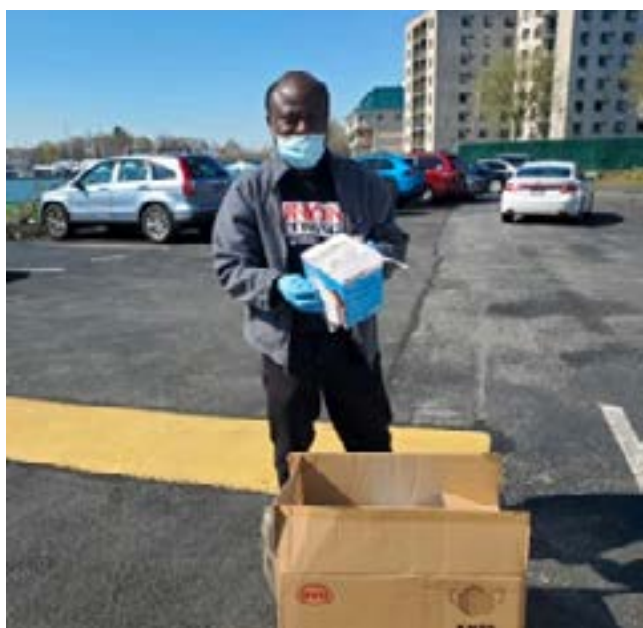
Puleo said he used the deliveries as a way to keep member engagement going during the pandemic.

"I want to see them and answer questions," he said. "And to share what news I can."

Puleo received 1,200 masks from PEF on a late Friday afternoon and hit the ground running on the following Monday armed with boxes of masks with PEF stickers on them.

From mall parking lots, to facility parking lots, Puleo delivered to three different divisions that first day.

He delivered packages to Executive Board member Erin O'Brien, who planned to distribute the masks to coworkers at Elmira Correctional Facility; to Division 359 Council Leader Michael Singleton, who gladly accepted the supply for his Elmira Department of Labor office; and to Southport Correctional Facility's treasurer, assistant council leader and steward, Apryl Clary, David "Butch" Pierson and Tammy Daniels, where he also talked to members about the status of their labor/management meetings.



Puleo made more drops, meeting up with Jennifer Kirk for Elmira Psychiatric Center (EPC), as well as with Brenda Veilleux at EPC's satellite site in Seneca Falls, where he met with facility management for the first time and chatted with a member. On April 29, Puleo went to Wellsville where he delivered to Alleghany County employees, some of whom are PEF members under a contract. The member he found there was a new member, who was meeting a PEF representative for the first time.

He also delivered masks to the New York State Fire Academy in Montour Falls, where he got a quick tour of the facility and saw the fallen worker memorial. Puleo has more plans to deliver masks in the coming days.

"Everyone was very excited to receive new masks," Puleo said. "The whole human connection was great. We are fortunate to have really good leaders here, they are all supportive."

Division 250 Council Leader Michael Singleton was grateful for the masks distributed in Region 2.

"My division is pretty small (approx. 17 members) and we are all working remotely from home," he said. "So, the need for PPE in order to perform our job duties has been minimal. However, that being said, the union has come through with surgical masks for my division, which is divided into two geographically separated offices.

"Although plans on returning to work are far from formalized for my agency, we will be allowed to wear PPE in the form of masks and gloves," he said. "The union has provided for that need well in advance. At the end of the day, it's real actions like this, and not lip service that I'm seeing."

Capital Region Psychiatric Center

In the Capital Region, mask distributions were also underway to another psychiatric center. Psychiatric centers have been making the news recently for cases of COVID-19 among patients and staff.

Division 231 Council Leader Mary Haltermann at Capital District Psychiatric Center (CDPC) said she was contacted by PEF staff member Jessica Carpenter about her division's need for masks.

"I was very fortunate in that Jess Carpenter contacted me and asked if we could use some masks. Dan [Carpenter] called me when they came in at PEF headquarters and Chris Leo brought them down to my facility, which was awesome," she said. "We didn't have to wait for the mail."

CDPC is right next to Albany Medical Center and currently houses about 112 inpatients, as well as offers outpatient services, which are currently limited to medications and injections.

"We've had cases among patients and staff," she said. "That was one reason people were happy to see the masks coming in. We also have to wear one per day and some people are mandated to work two shifts in a row. It helps to have a backup mask with them."

Her members were overwhelmed and grateful they were included in the PEF mask distribution.

"That PEF was distributing them was a real boost to everybody," Haltermann said. "They reacted overwhelmingly overjoyed. People were calling me wanting to know where I was so that they could get their masks. They were over the moon about getting the masks from PEF."

Haltermann said many of her members have the old “cone-style” masks.

“They are very hard. They cut into your face when you have them on all day,” she said. “They were very, very happy to get these masks.”

Central New York Psychiatric Center

PEF members at facilities across the state have been grateful for the masks procured by PEF.

“At CNYPC we have eight wards on isolation due to positive COVID-19 patients,” said PEF member Jennifer Fehlner, who distributed masks at Central New York Psychiatric Center. “PEF staff deemed essential were wearing homemade cloth masks to protect themselves. Only those having prolonged direct contact were given PPE. On April 20, PEF delivered enough N95s for each inpatient PEF member to be given proper PPE to wear while performing their essential duties.”

Members in her division expressed many concerns before the delivery, Fehlner said.

“There are members who have concerns that the surgical masks are not enough to protect them while performing their job duties,” Fehlner said. “These include members who work on units that don’t have confirmed cases (yet), members who launder heavily soiled linen from COVID+ residents, and members who have not yet been provided workspaces where they can socially distance from other staff.”

She passed on words of gratitude from Division 344 members.



“Thank you for picking up the masks! People were very thankful to PEF!” one said.

“Staff have been really appreciative of the masks. . .I think it really helps for them to feel like their union has their backs,” said another.

“Thank you PEF for the masks, they have given the many essential workers confidence to continue providing services to our population during this difficult time. It is nice to know you have our backs,” said a third.

Office of Children and Family Services

Nick Caputi, from the state Office of Children and Family Services, distributed masks to his coworkers and was thankful to PEF for providing them.

“Throughout these scary times brought on by the coronavirus pandemic it has been a great comfort to know that our union and President Wayne Spence has our back and is supporting the PEF members, especially essential staff,” Caputi said. “PEF made sure we had masks and is monitoring our safety.”

Western New York DDSO

Division 243 Council Leader Donna Karcz said PEF sent some N95 masks, which stewards have been giving out to members in the division’s OPWDD facilities.

“As the WNYDDSO has been restricting the use of PPE, with staff being told to re-use paper surgical masks for a week, any help is appreciated, especially for our Habilitation Specialists who normally function as teachers in Day Hab, but are now being utilized as front line staff in group homes so the agency can maximize Medicaid billing,” Karcz said. “This is a very scary time, especially for our members on the front lines. We truly appreciate the efforts that PEF has made toward protecting our members.”

Sunmount DDSO

Tupper Lake’s Sunmount DDSO is currently experiencing a surge of COVID cases.

“There is a hotspot right now in one of our community homes,” said Division 242 Council Leader Stephanie Champagne. “I pursued PPE, whatever I could get from PEF, because of the fact we’re so rural here and having a horrible time getting supplies because of the area.”

The St. Lawrence County hotspot is just one of the facilities in Champagne’s division, which is widespread, with some members an hour and 15 minutes away from each other.

"My concern was not having enough," she said. "I've been trying to be as proactive as possible, often that isn't how state agencies operate. We are trying to get ahead of this in any way possible."

Champagne reached out to PEF for surgical masks, mini hand sanitizer from Membership Benefits and just received face shields.

The 270 masks sent by PEF will be going directly to frontline people dealing with COVID individuals, she said.

"Our agency is one of the agencies that has had PPE, but some of this stuff is being rationed, it's not like you can just go and grab a mask so my goal was an attempt to have a reserve," she said. "It's a huge comfort to know we're a part of something bigger."

"I think that often people view big PEF supporting Albany and New York City area. It's a huge comfort and a source of pride to know that we're valued up here in the North Country," Champagne said. "I feel like statewide leaders have been responsive to my questions and to my asks. We don't have the volume of members or cases that other more urban areas do. It's great to know that we're not forgotten."

Buffalo Psychiatric Center

Executive Board member Vincent Cicatello at Buffalo Psychiatric Center has been doling out masks to members on the frontlines within his division and said the morale boost has been noticeable.

"We received 150 masks and I'm still giving some out," he said. "As we are handing them out and telling them they are coming from PEF, members are extremely pleased and supportive. They are saying, 'Make sure you thank PEF and President Spence, it means a lot to us.'"

Cicatello said members are thrilled their union is taking an active roll in protecting them.

"By PEF doing this, members are feeling a lot of support," he said. "These N95 masks are better than the cloth masks or the surgical masks that are going around."

Buffalo Psychiatric Center has an inpatient unit, clinics, and residential group homes. Cicatello is working to distribute the masks to the different work sites, with a focus on frontline workers.

He said it's not an "us versus them" mentally with administration and the masks being provided for staff.

"This is something our union is doing to support our members. It's not a negative," he said. "It's going across agencies and it's a good gesture to make sure these masks are

out to the members. People feel a lot safer when they have better masks."

Department of Labor

PEF members at the Department of Labor are still working in the office, providing much-needed services to many New Yorkers during unprecedented unemployment. Division 202 Steward Wayne Bowers has been facilitating distribution of masks to members in need at his office.

"We have quite a few still working on our floor and we have new hires," Bowers said. "We work in cubicles and we are not going to always be able to maintain social distancing. Our agency had hand sanitizer. As far as anything else, nothing else was provided."

The members willing to stay in the office appreciate PEF's contribution.

"It's a nice gesture," Bowers said. "If they're willing to stay there working in the building it's something they will need. Some people have to go to work, they can't work from home."

You can help

PEF is gathering sponsors and donors for its Relief Fund to continue providing both PPE and hotel rooms for members in need. Read about the [Relief Fund efforts here](#) . [Donate here](#).



In addition to donations, PEF has also been able to purchase a quantity of surgical masks. Any divisions needing masks can contact Dan Carpenter at dcarpenter@pef.org.

NYS Fire Protection Specialists
PEF Div 179

Stony Brook Hospital, NICU

Nurses from SUNY Upstate arrive at Stony Brook Hospital

PEF President Wayne Spence & members administering tests

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

Nurses from SUNY Upstate arrive at Stony Brook Hospital

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

In hard times, heroes emerge.

Thank you, PEF heroes for your work, your dedication and your continued commitment to PEF and the residents of New York state.

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NEW + EXISTING PEF MEMBERS

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Finding strength, beauty in this dark night

By KAY ALISON WILKIE

"When it is dark enough, you can see the stars."
Charles A. Beard

My last S-T column, penned at the end of 2019, seems a world away. Few of us imagined then that the global pandemic would transform every facet of our personal, union, and work lives, and place many members in life or death situations.

As your finance team prepared the PEF Budget for 2020-21, little did we know that the still unnamed virus spreading in China would, by March, turn New York City and the entire state into a hot spot, with transmission so fearful and intense that we could not safely congregate, nor convene our upcoming March Executive Board meeting in person.

Please rest assured that the 2020-21 budget and other time sensitive matters were implemented in time, following our March 26 eboard conference call, to be ratified in a subsequent meeting permitting deliberations and voting.

The budget provides resources and flexibility for accomplishing strategic goals, such as:

- Negotiations and activities for a fair contract;
- Membership engagement and organizing initiatives;
- Civil service enforcement;
- Activism to expand public services and oppose privatization; and
- Opposition to workplace discrimination and bigotry.

Given New York state mandates regarding social distancing during this pandemic, most of us at PEF are working primarily from home. Of course, NYS directives have also resulted in the halting of our infrastructure repair and improvements construction project at Albany headquarters. Still, much work has been accomplished supporting PEF members, and more is underway, such as:

- Special Events outreach to hotels and members, to arrange for hotel stays for nurses and other frontline direct-care professionals in order to protect their health and safety and families.
- Purchasing PPE (personal protective equipment) to protect our members.

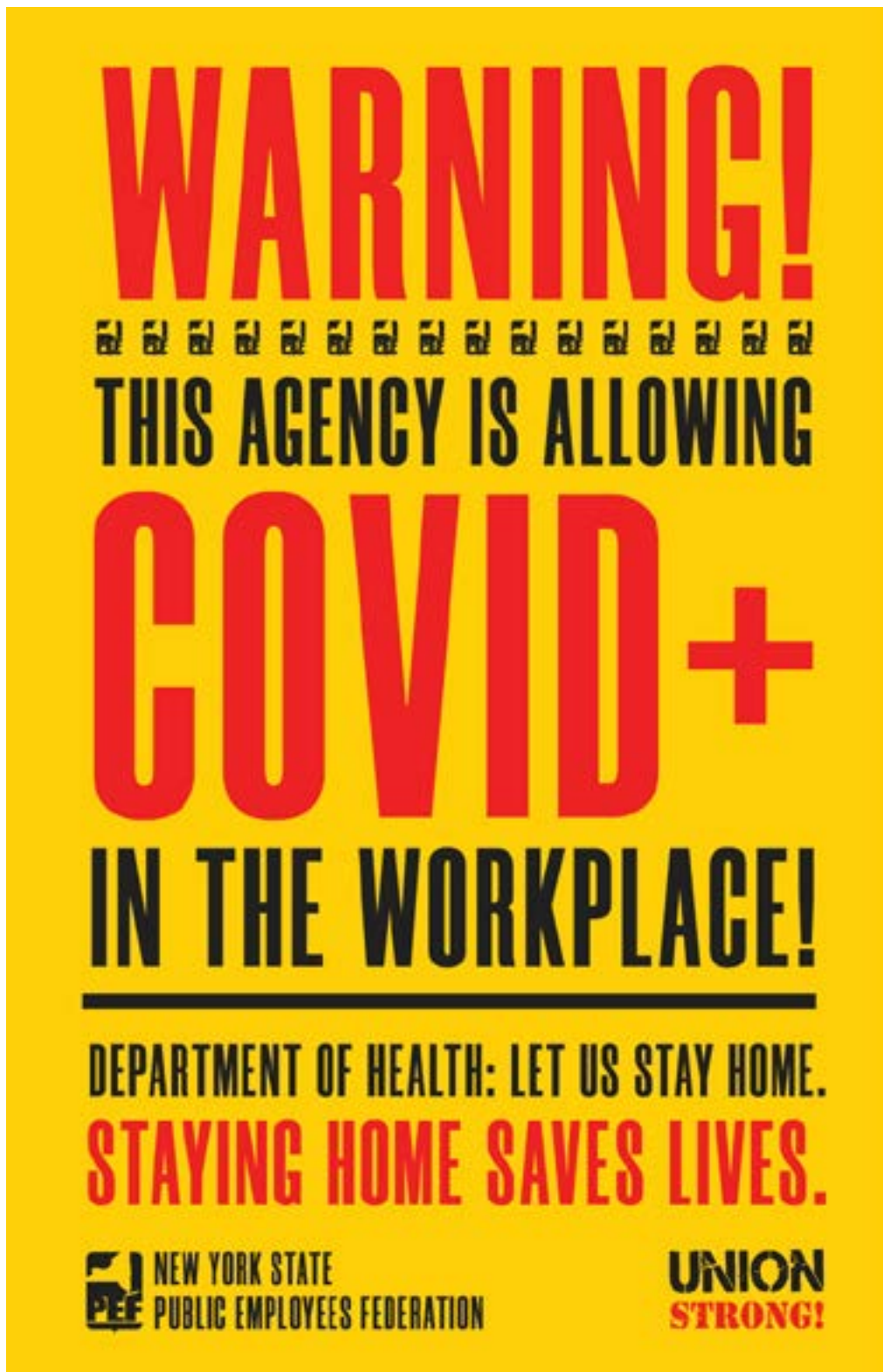
- Teamwork to launch PEF's ability to accept donations to offset our expenses related to providing hotel stays and PPE, both to PEF Relief Fund and through a new GoFundMe site – promoted on PEF website and social media.
- MIS arranged for PEF staff to be equipped to work remotely within 48 hours. Note that this rapid action was possible due to IT infrastructure upgrades made in 2019.
- IT infrastructure upgrades continuing.
- Team planning for contingencies and additional virtual meetings with greater functionality, due to uncertainties surrounding future PEF meetings and gatherings.
- Finance management for check issuance and reporting functions.
- Team support for essential functions and activities of divisions and committees.
- Orientation and training for the new PEF internal auditor.

The stress and insecurity of our present "Twilight Zone" existence impacts all of us. Our many members in direct contact with those infected by COVID-19 have demonstrated amazing courage while facing unfathomable risks. All of our members are adapting to unprecedented stress and anxiety related to the coronavirus, and many face significantly altered working assignments and conditions.

Please remember that PEF resources are in place to help us all cope: Questions & Answers about the coronavirus on the PEF website are updated regularly; there is a new benefit from our affiliate the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to assist members with the trauma; and PEF welcomes your requests for support.

In closing, let us all please take care of one another with kindness amidst this new reality. We will survive and eventually thrive to the extent we work together as a union movement. Please know that PEF members are outstanding and inspiring. We express our solidarity and gratitude for being #UnionStrong, especially during a crisis, because this is how #PEFDOESIT!

"Even from a dark night songs of beauty may be born."
Maryanne Radmacker-Hershey



More to come...
and Watch for upcoming story

PEF pulling for federal aid to stave off NYS budget cuts

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

PEF has been working hard for weeks to build support in Washington for federal aid to the states and municipalities facing severe financial shortfalls as a result of the pandemic and necessary shutdowns to business and other operations.

"PEF has been at the forefront of the effort to secure federal support for New York; hazard pay for our members; and funding for PPE. We advanced our own federal funding agenda almost a month ago," PEF Legislative Director Patrick Lyons said. "Our federal work is coordinated with both the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) and SEIU (Service Employees International Union). Both of PEF's international union affiliates have been engaged with us in lobbying to get this aid and both are working together in DC with their elected leaders and state and local affiliates. It is a coordinated effort."

PEF President Wayne Spence has been writing to New York's governor and to representatives in Congress, and now the union has joined with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in organizing members to call their congressional representatives.

But before the campaign to raise support for increased federal aid began, Spence wrote to Gov. Andrew Cuomo March 29 to suggest options for meeting budgetary shortfalls without cutting state jobs and services. Obtaining federal emergency aid for state operations topped that list, but other suggestions included raising revenues through such things as a short-term pandemic income tax surcharge on billionaires and those with annual incomes of more than \$5 million. And if cuts to state spending cannot be avoided, then perhaps they could focus on reducing support for the \$1 billion in annual state expenditures for outside services and consultants.

At the end of April, 70 volunteers sent text messages to 28,000 PEF members asking them to make that call requesting their U.S. representative to support legislation providing \$500 billion in aid to states and local governments and to workers who've lost their jobs and paychecks. More than 3,000 PEF members responded to say they would make the call.



"We already know that our two New York senators, Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, support this aid. They understand how critically this state needs it, since we are the hardest hit state in the entire country," Spence said. "We want to be sure our representatives in the House understand it fully as well. And they need to know that their constituents are demanding this aid to protect our jobs and services and keep our state and communities functioning through this very challenging and unprecedented emergency."

"We also know the governor does not want to layoff state workers, which would cripple state services and only make unemployment worse," Spence said, "but the governor has said he will be forced to cut state spending by 10 percent across the board if New York does not receive substantial federal help getting through this crisis."

In fact, when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky suggested that states and municipalities should just declare bankruptcy (which the law does not allow them to do), Gov. Cuomo fired back that New Yorkers always pay more taxes to the federal government than comes back to the



state in federal aid, while some other states such as Kentucky receive more federal aid than their citizens pay in federal taxes.

PEF Legislative Director Patrick Lyons said that the Democratic majority in the House is currently trying to get more federal funding for the states, local governments and especially for individual citizens who have lost their jobs and are experiencing great financial hardship as a result of the shutdown. Lyons said he remains concerned that a bill to provide this aid may not gain sufficient support in the Republican led Senate, and that even if it passes in both houses of Congress the president might refuse to sign it unless the public demands it.

On May 7, Spence and other SEIU union leaders wrote to all of the members of Congress detailing the extreme financial hardship that workers are facing as millions lose their jobs and their states and local governments strain to meet the health crisis while losing their revenues at the same time.

"We are all experiencing this nightmare together, and we will all work to do whatever we can to be safe, help others, do our jobs and preserve our communities," Spence said.

"I thank the PEF members who called their members of Congress, the many volunteers who texted them as part of this national day of action organized by SEIU, and I am grateful for the support we are receiving in Congress," Spence said. "Our leaders in Washington are elected to look out for the interests of us, the American people, and I hope they recognize that we are doing our very best to meet the challenges posed by this unprecedented crisis that suddenly engulfed us and countries throughout the world.

"As PEF members I ask you to please continue to stand strong and respond when we reach out to you for help as this crisis continues to play out. This is very difficult, but I know we will get through it because we are always stronger together."



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Social worker's skills rise to meet challenges at Javits Center hospital

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

Kevin Wilson, a licensed master social worker 1 and PEF council leader at Long Island Developmental Disabilities Services Organization in Centereach, said he was very surprised one morning in April at work to find an email saying that he had been selected for possible deployment to work as a volunteer at the emergency COVID-19 hospital that had been established by the US military at the Jacob Javits Conference Center in New York City.

"I'm considered an essential employee, in fact OPWDD considers us all to be essential employees, so I was confused about why I was getting this message," Wilson said. After checking around, Wilson discovered that he and two colleagues on Long Island had received this invitation, but the other two had declined it.

"So, I called the Javits Center and told them that I'm an essential employee and still working and asked them about the email. They said, 'We need your help.'"

Married and the father of young children, Wilson took a night to think it over before deciding to take on the challenge. He went to the city April 19 and began working at the center April 20 doing patient intake and discharge planning for the most challenging cases, mostly patients with no homes to return to after they no longer needed hospitalization. He worked seven days a week, from 7 a.m. to 9 or 10 p.m.

from April 20 until May 1 when the last patients had been discharged or transported to other hospitals for continuing care. He was housed at a local hotel.

It turns out that Wilson had previous experience working for a hospital in the city as a discharge planner, and his familiarity with the city and surrounding areas were also a great advantage.

Four other social workers were recruited from temp agencies to help with the work, but only two of them were licensed social workers.

Wilson was appointed the lead case management with responsibility for planning the intake and discharge work, directing the other four team members, attending top level staff meetings and working at a command center where he could trouble shoot problems and challenges as they arose. "I didn't see anyone there that I knew," Wilson said. What he did find was an operation that involved a host of federal, state, city and private agencies and organizations that all had different structures, rules, approaches and views about how the operation should be managed. They included the U.S. Public Health Service, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), New York City Emergency Management, Northwell Health, the NYS Health Department and the NYC Health Department.



"I went to all of the briefings," Wilson said. "We all had to cooperate and work in tandem to fulfill the mission."

His team "did patient intakes on new patients as they came in. It was our responsibility to see that every patient who was discharged went safely to a place where they could complete their recovery in isolation. For people who had no homes that usually meant a homeless shelter or a hotel.

"We had to meet with every patient and that meant being completely suited up" in masks, gowns, disposable booties, etc.

Wilson said he was very impressed by the efficiency of the military personnel in maintaining the process of disinfecting everything. "They sprayed us every time we touched our mask, or took off a glove."

Although the hospital and its mission were in emergency mode, the paperwork and accompanying rules were not flexible.

The social workers had to fill out several versions of one form including a 16-page NYC Homeless Services form for many patients. "My team members were filling in the forms by hand and those forms were rejected. We were told they must be typewritten. So we had to go back and do them over again. Then, we were told that the forms we were using were for 2018, and we must use 2019 forms, so again they all had to be done over," Wilson said.

By the time Wilson and the case management team was assembled, patients had already been admitted and military personnel had taken some information when the patients came in, but the social workers had to go back and take and report the full information.

"Our backs were up against the wall, and we had only five people to go out and meet with patients. So, the state Health Department recruited one more person for our team." Then, five nurses from different parts of the country, who were part of the NDMS, suddenly showed up. "They were not social workers and they did not know New York City, but they were there to help. So, it was my job to give them an orientation and quick training," Wilson said.

The time he spent there was exhausting, but Wilson said he is very glad he did it.

For one thing, Wilson said he has come back with many new friends that he expects to keep in touch with.

"Pulling all of those personalities and skill sets together to do the job created personal bonds for life," he said. "It completely changed us. I think I will be more open to new challenges that pertain to assisting in national disaster zones."

The most important practical lessons the experience taught him, Wilson said, is that "discharge begins at intake. Bring us in from the start. Don't wait to bring in discharge planners when the operation is ready to close down. And you need discharge planners who know the area and who know who the local players are, such as the agencies, shelters, hotels and service providers."

Most of all, Wilson said, he is very happy to have had this experience because he could make an important difference for people who really needed his help.

"Part of the oath we take as social workers is to promote social justice for all people, and I did that. For many patients, I was there to derail a process that might have put them out on the street. I think it was important to make sure every person, no matter how poor they might be or what problems they had, was able to have a safe place to rest their head at night."

COVID-19 ramping up the pressure on harried prison medical staff

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

Many PEF members who work in the state prison system would tell you privately that it is a very challenging atmosphere on many levels, and the current coronavirus pandemic has only intensified the tension and angst.

Not only do the clients include the state's most dangerous criminals, the system at the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision favors corrections officers and often leaves the professional, scientific and technical employees that PEF represents feeling like "outsiders" who are denied the respect they deserve.

The superintendents at each facility have considerable authority and some have demonstrated greater concern than others about the pandemic's threat. Some have allowed contact sports to continue while others have imposed greater restrictions to reduce personal contact and the possible spread of infection.

Medical and health care staff members in the prisons are considered essential and are continuing to work through the crisis, while the educational staff members are deemed non-essential and are not working in the facilities.

"If it wasn't for our nurses, panic in the prisons would be much greater," a PEF member said. "This pandemic is spotlighting how important nurses and other medical staff are to the successful operation of any correctional facility."

Asked if PEF nurses at one correctional facility are afraid of becoming infected, a co-worker said the nurses must be strong and calm just to work there under non-crisis conditions.

A PEF leader complained of the very unprofessional and often crude language used to address PEF members. Even in this time of a medical crisis, nurses are often cursed and called vulgar names by managers and other employees.

Sometimes the nurses have the necessary personal protective equipment they need for contact with infected persons, but often they are missing gloves, masks or hand sanitizer. And both inmates and staff are getting infected.

Nurse understaffing is a chronic issue at many, if not most, prisons and overtime was routine even before the current pandemic. This situation is similar to flu season, but the COVID-19 virus is much more dangerous and threatens both the staff and inmates. PEF has learned that at least some nurses from the DOCCS main office have been temporarily redeployed to bolster the health care staffing in some facilities.

When someone tests positive for the COVID-19 virus in a particular housing unit, the inmate is isolated and is moved to a hospital if greater care is necessary. The housing unit is quarantined and the nurses must go back and forth every day to that unit to continue testing, watch for anyone new developing symptoms and ensure proper precautions are followed to prevent more inmates from becoming infected. Ordinarily, the nurses work in the facility infirmary and only go into the housing units to respond to medical emergencies.

"We are very concerned about protecting the rights of all PEF members to safe and respectful working conditions, and we know that our members who work in direct patient care in hospitals, mental hygiene facilities, correctional facilities and other such locations are facing great challenges," PEF President Wayne Spence said. He cited the example of some correctional facilities forcing nurses who are quarantined for the virus to use their leave accruals to cover that 14-day period, even though the governor has said they don't need to charge leave for that time. "Our stewards and field staff are helping members grieve such abuses," Spence said.

"This union will continue whatever it can to represent and to help them today and every day as they put their lives on the line to serve the people of New York. These PEF members are professionals and they deserve, not just our respect and support, but that of their managers and co-workers as well."

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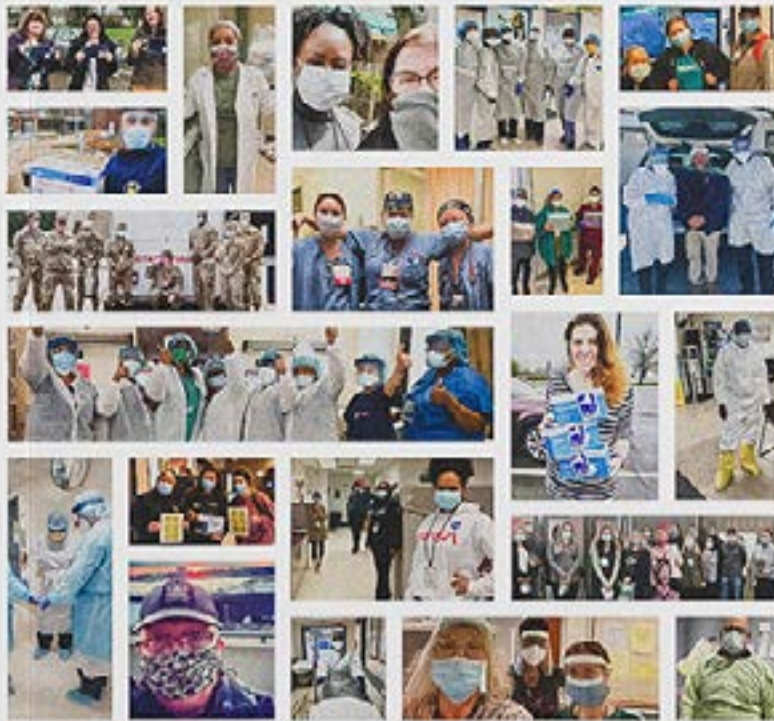
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Nurses were crucial during 1918 flu pandemic

By KATE MOSTACCIO

Our world today is very different than it was at the end of 2019.

As we navigate the changes brought on by the COVID-19 virus – hundreds of thousands infected, businesses and schools closed, stay-at-home orders, and social distancing – the critical role of nurses caring for the sick and risking their own health comes to the forefront.

Rewind more than 100 years ago and you'll find that nurses were also vital during another health crisis – the 1918 flu pandemic.

In 1918, the main treatment for the rapidly spreading flu was supportive nursing care as there were no antiviral medications to slow the progression of the flu and no antibiotics to treat the pneumonia that followed for many patients.

Trained graduate nurses were the best offense against the flu. Armed with the most commonly prescribed treatments of Vapo Rub, aspirin, bed rest, sponge baths, whiskey, cough

medicines, clean bedding and hot soups, these dedicated professionals were on the frontlines of the pandemic.

"Thousands of patients reported the classic symptoms of influenza — fever, aches, sore throat, and headache. However, this strain struck more severely and soon some patients turned blue at the fingers, arms or face, had trouble breathing, and even bled. More shocking was these were young men and women suffering from these terrible symptoms," according to a University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing [publication](#). "Doctors had few resources and few medicines to assist at the time though they did their best. Nurses could help. Nursing care was critical in the day-to-day battle against influenza. Nurses were overwhelmed with numbers of patients, either at the hospital, at home, or in the field, yet they continued to do their job in the face of overwhelming numbers."

Then, like now, nurses were stretched incredibly thin as patients flooded hospitals and the need for visiting nurses skyrocketed.



Nurse at tent hospital. Source: National Archives and Records Administration, 165-WWW-269B-5.

"Indeed, when the epidemic arrived in the United States in the fall of 1918, professional nurses were stretched thin," stated an article by Arlene W. Keeling, RN, PhD, in the 2010 Public Health Reports. "Hospitals were deluged with flu victims; wards overflowed and graduate nurses had to use both medical students and 'pupil nurses' to help. In the community, there were simply not enough Visiting, Public Health, Red Cross and Blue Circle nurses to provide care."

Nurses in 1918 were in high demand, but the profession was still relatively new, with nursing schools opening only about 45 years earlier. The war in Europe also pulled nurses away from the home front, leaving hospitals and nursing programs short staffed.

"In the fall of 1918, the United States experienced a severe shortage of professional nurses during the flu pandemic because large numbers of them were deployed to military camps in the United States and abroad. This shortage was made worse by the failure to use trained African American nurses," according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [blog](#).

Scenes from 1918 are eerily similar to 2020. Some hospital flu wards with 20 beds were caring for upwards of 40 patients. Nurses were working 12-hour shifts trying to accommodate the patient load. Elective surgeries were canceled. Visiting nurses were welcomed and often swamped by communities desperate for their assistance.

"Local governments closed theaters, schools, churches, and saloons to prevent the disease from spreading. Telegraph and telephone services collapsed as operators took to their beds. Trash filled the streets as garbage men reported sick. Mail piled up as postal carriers failed to come to work. Some cities, including San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, and Seattle, required all citizens to wear gauze masks in public," according to an [article](#) in CARING magazine in June 2013.

Visiting nurses were repeatedly overwhelmed by families in New York City, where the flu took 30,000 lives. "Desperate people watched from windows and doorways for a nurse," the CARING article stated. "They surrounded her on the street, begging her to go in six directions as once. The ragged chorus of pleas rang loudest in the city's teeming slums..."

The flu sickened and sometimes took the lives of nurses. As defense against the illness, they resorted to masks. Unfortunately, the gauze masks were largely ineffective. Combatting COVID-19, nurses across the world risk infection and put their own safety on the line as they continue to provide care every day. Protecting themselves is just as important now as it was 100 years ago and personal protective equipment like masks, gowns, face shields and gloves are vital to their work.

Nonprofit formed in memory of PEF member Jamie Rose Martin supports domestic violence awareness, prevention

By KATE MOSTACCIO

In May 2017, just before Mother's Day, PEF member Jamie Rose Martin was gunned down by her ex-boyfriend in an act of domestic violence that rocked the small Tupper Lake community where she lived with her children.

Her murder sent shockwaves through not only her neighborhood, but also Sunmount DDSO, where she spent most of her life working, starting as a camp counselor at age 16 and working as an habilitation specialist 2 at the time of her death.

Struggling with her loss, friends and family found a way to keep Martin's memory alive. They launched The Family and Friends of Jamie Rose Martin, an organization dedicated to awareness of and fighting against domestic violence.

"When things first happened, we wanted to do something to honor her memory," said PEF member Amanda Amell, a psychologist 2 at Sunmount and one of Martin's coworkers. "One thing her mother had said was that she didn't want people to forget Jamie. She was just so genuine and caring and happy all the time."

Amell said friends and family noticed the lack of domestic violence supports in Tupper Lake and sought to remedy the problem.



"We saw that there was a serious lack of resources in our community," Amell said. "It's a really small town. A lot of services and money goes into bigger areas and we're a little remote. We wanted to help promote domestic violence prevention and to do what we could to help people that need services in our community."

People are talking about domestic violence more now and more incidents of domestic violence are being reported in New York while the state is "on pause" and people are spending most of their time at home.



"We feel that talking about it is important," Amell said. Each year, the nonprofit organization participates in community events and hosts fundraisers — inspired by Martin's loves, such as art and Halloween.

"On May 9, we will be holding the third annual Jamie Rose Power Walk: Break the Silence of Domestic Violence," Amell said. "It's on the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend to honor Jamie because Jamie was killed on May 10, just before Mother's Day."

Due to COVID, this year's walk will be a virtual walk and participants are encouraged to walk anywhere they can maintain social distancing.

Around Martin's birthday, the group usually hosts a Paint and Sip event, as well.

"Jamie was an artist," Amell said. "She majored in art and social work. We usually have about 100 people there."

Local businesses also submit donations directly. PEF Division 242 has collected funds for the cause.

"We also have a scholarship in Jamie's name at the local high school," Amell said. "This year, we decided to double that scholarship." The money goes to one Tupper Lake High School senior each year.

Some of the funds were used on trainings.



"In 2018, we paid for training for six of us to become mentors and for a violence prevention program," Amell said. "Mentors can go into high schools or workplaces and talk about some ways to intervene in situations of domestic violence. Step in and say something, instead of allowing things to go on." Other PEF members involved in the nonprofit are Vicki Dukette, Nina Robert, and Michelle Dukette.

Anyone wishing to make a donation can email familyandfriendsofjrm@gmail.com for more information or visit the [Facebook page](#).

New Yorkers seeking help can text 844-997-2121 or chat with a professional on the new confidential website at www.opdv.ny.gov. The text and online services will be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week with OPDV staff who are experts in the area of domestic violence.

COVID-19: PEF Q&A

PEF Members should contact their Division's local leaders with any concerns to ensure that workplace issues are being presented to management at local labor/management meetings. These meetings can and should be ongoing and may be conducted via tele-conferencing.

This is an update to the FAQs that were originally distributed on March 18, 2020, which have been updated regularly since that date. It is intended to help guide you through the ongoing and evolving public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 Virus.

Since the last update to this FAQ, guidance and regulations have been issued by the U.S. Department of Labor regarding the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). More detailed information about the FFCRA can be found here ([link to our FFCRA Advisory](#)).

This FAQ will continue to be updated as needed.

[Click here for PEF Q&A](#)

Experts at town hall: Act now to max Workers' Comp chances

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

As PEF members strive to do their jobs, some working from home but most reporting to work day after day, they face a constant worry that they will be exposed and become infected with the very dangerous and sometimes fatal COVID-19 virus that is taking a tremendous toll on the lives and health of New Yorkers.

"We are doing whatever we can to help members work safely, but we know they could still be exposed and infected at work," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "That's why we are offering two tele-town hall trainings to help them better understand how to protect their Workers' Compensation benefits. We provided the first of these trainings tonight (April 23) and we will hold another one Saturday morning, April 25. We will post recordings of these events on our website to accommodate members who cannot listen to them live.

I hope members will take full advantage of this opportunity because knowing now what you need to do, is much better than waiting until you may be very ill or even hospitalized to realize you need to take action.

"It's really, really important for PEF members to document their actual and possible work-related exposures now, even if they don't feel sick or haven't yet been diagnosed with the virus at this time," Spence told listeners at the April 23 town hall. He said it was a painful lesson that PEF members learned after 9/11 when many of the most serious illnesses related to that event and the rescue and recovery efforts didn't appear until months or even years later.

You can use an [exposure tracking form](#) available from PEF online to start recording your exposure/s.

The training is provided by a panel of three of the top and most experienced private attorneys representing workers in Workers Compensation, disability and related legal matters. They are [Robert Grey](#), [Alex Dell](#) and [Vinnie Rossillo](#). PEF occupational safety and health specialist Geraldine Stella, led their discussion by presenting questions that members submitted in advance including when they registered for the April 23 event.

Spence and Stella advised members to check out and use the helpful [Workers' Comp related information and forms](#) provided in the COVID-19 section of the PEF website.

The legal experts on the panel provided insights, tips and answers to many questions that can help members understand if and how filing for Workers' Compensation may be an important and time-sensitive option for them if they are infected with the virus at work. They, too, stressed the importance of documenting exposures in detail as soon as possible and while the information is still fresh in your mind.

If a member feels they are being directed to work under potentially dangerous circumstances, they can document that by filing a [protest of assignment form](#), which is available from PEF.

If a member believes they have been exposed and infected at work, they should notify their local PEF steward, council leader or their PEF field representative or email the PEF health and safety department. The rules established by the Workers' Compensation Board, state Civil Service Law and provisions of the PS&T contract could all potentially come into play.

The member also needs to promptly file an incident reporting form (available from the employer) notifying their employer of the exposure and of a related illness and diagnosis.

The attorneys made the case for filing for Workers' Compensation rather than just using their health insurance to cover their related medical expenses.

Under Workers' Comp, Rossillo said, "You are covered from Day One. And even if you develop a related illness years down the road, you will be covered in full. Even if your initial claim was denied you have up to 18 years to reopen your case. If your claim succeeds, Workers' Comp will pay everything, with no deductible, co-pays or other out-of-pocket expenses for you. Your coverage continues into your retirement, or if you move out of the state or change employers."

"It costs you nothing to file a claim," Rossillo added.

He and the other attorneys acknowledged that employees may represent themselves if their employer controverts (challenges) their Workers' Comp claim, but they advised you to hire a lawyer specializing in this area of law because preparing and presenting your case will be adversarial and your employer will be represented by an attorney specializing in this law.

All three of the attorneys on the panel have agreed to take the COVID-related case of any PEF member who wants to hire them. They will receive no pay unless the claim is successful and then they would typically receive 10 percent to 15 percent of the award. No attorney may receive more than 20 percent for their work on a Workers' Compensation case.

Grey said that after 9/11 the state Workers' Compensation Board ruled that claims of injuries resulting from that event must be filed within a certain time frame after that exposure, not after the injury or illness appeared years later.

"If you don't file now, you may lose benefits later," he cautioned PEF members. "Workers' Compensation is your only remedy against your employer. You can't sue them unless you can show the employer intended to injure you. And you won't be able to prove that."

If you are struggling to decide whether to file a claim now, Grey said, follow this rule-of-thumb: "When in doubt, fill it out. It may provide very significant protection for you for the rest of your life."

Dell said you need to notify your employer of your exposure and possibly related injury within 14 days, and the success of your Workers' Comp claim will rest on how well you can prove your injury and that it was caused by your on-the-job exposure and some other possible exposure unrelated to your work.

That is why the best, most detailed documentation of both the exposure and the illness are essential. You will likely need to detail when and how you were exposed and by whom. Were there witnesses? Who are they? Were you exposed while doing your job, or by some incidental exposure at work such as riding in elevator with someone you believe was infected? Why do you think they were infected? What symptoms did they display? Were they wearing a mask? Were you wearing protective gear? How long were you close to this person? And many more details could be relevant. Then you will need the same level of dates and details about your "injury" – when did you start to feel sick, what did you do? How did your illness progress? Were you tested? Were you diagnosed and by whom? How and where were you treated? When did you recover?

Showing that you had a work exposure that caused your real illness is at the heart of your case and Dell advised that, "It's best to have your health care provider (in a written statement) make that connection for you."

Rossillo added that if you can successfully show that you were really injured as a result of a work-related exposure, "You are covered even if you were working off the books, even if it was an incidental exposure and not part of your regular duties." But if it was under such circumstances, "It's even more important to document your exposure contemporaneously (as soon as possible after it happened)."

In addition to promptly notifying your employer of what you believe is a work-related injury, Dell said you must also contact

the state [Accident Reporting System through its toll-free number](#). And you must file a [C-3 form](#) (available online from the WCB) to begin a claim with the Workers' Compensation Board.

"The Workers' Compensation Board wants three things from you," Dell said. These include a history of how you came to be exposed, what is your diagnosis, and a doctor's statement connecting the diagnosis to the exposure. The board wants to see (at least) probability (that the work-related exposure caused the injury). 'Maybe' or 'possibly' are not likely to be successful."

The lawyers cautioned members not to give up when they encounter obstacles in making their case, and Dell also recommended that members take a kind of shotgun approach that gives them multiple opportunities for success.

"When things become adverse," Dell said, "people tend to have tunnel vision (focusing on just one desired outcome). Instead, apply simultaneously for multiple benefits to improve your chance of success. So, you could apply for a disability retirement as well as filing your Workers' Comp claim. If you filed for the disability retirement as soon as you knew you were sick, it could make a huge difference for your surviving beneficiaries if your illness became fatal.

Grey noted that death claims are entirely different than the Workers' Comp claims filed by the employee, because death claims are filed by the deceased employee's next-of-kin, usually their spouse. The death claim is not affected by what may have happened to a Workers' Comp claim filed by the employee. In addition to benefits provided by law, Article 13 of the PS&T contract also speaks to this issue.

Gaining this information, and taking early, smart steps can be very valuable, Stella said, But she added, don't stop there, "Please keep in touch with your PEF representative or our Health and Safety Department. We want to know how you are doing."



Tele-Town Hall

Listen Now

PEF nurse uses skills to aid Guatemalans in need

By KATE MOSTACCIO



Susan Thomas was volunteering in Guatemala, building homes for the poor, when someone was injured and she rendered aid.

Her medical skills caught the attention of another volunteer. "She asked, 'Are you a nurse?' I told her yes and she said, 'We need to talk,'" recalled Thomas, a PEF nurse since 2013 at Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse. The woman was from an organization called Health Talents International. "She told me about this surgical clinic they do once or twice a month for a week in the coastal region of Mantalano. They treat people who don't have access to health care due to their socio-economic or their financial status."

Thomas jumped at the chance to offer her services. "This agency does mobile clinics and they go out in the surrounding villages and they help people," she said. Guatemalan physicians will evaluate the locals who come to a site to determine who might benefit from surgical intervention. Those patients are directed to attend another evaluation, this time with American doctors, who determine if surgery is necessary.

"It's word of mouth," Thomas said. "The local doctors speak their language and know the culture."

In 2017, Thomas began traveling to Guatemala to participate in the surgical clinics. She was scheduled to travel down for the 14th time this April before the coronavirus pandemic forced trip cancellations. Each trip, she funds herself.

"I feel like it's really an opportunity for me to go and use my skills and really show love of God," Thomas said. "God has blessed me so much with my kids, the things I have, my job. I use the resources my husband and I have to really bless somebody else."

Health Talents International has temporarily suspended trips due to COVID-19, but anyone over the age 16, with or without medical background, can still visit the website and get information about the clinics and programs in Guatemala. "I would love it if there was anyone out there that had a mission trip on their bucket list," Thomas said. She offered her email if someone was interested: joyfull62@live.com. "It would be great if someone wanted to come along."

It's a big commitment, with costs ranging from \$1,200 to \$1,700 a trip. That includes airfare, room and board, and funds for necessary medical supplies used in the surgical clinic over the course of the week in Guatemala.

"You don't have to be a medical person," Thomas said. "You can be a caregiver. People can escort someone to the bathroom, get someone a glass of water, or hold a cold compress for a patient. I had one nurse go along with me and she loved it."





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Family Fun Day events postponed



PEF MBP has made the very difficult decision to postpone the 2020 Family Fun Day events scheduled for: Great Adventure, July 11; Darien Lake, July 18; and Great Escape, August 8.

The events are postponed until 2021, pending confirmation from the Six Flags theme parks.

"With the outlook of the COVID-19 precautions uncertain for the summer months this year, we feel this decision best reflects our concern for the health, safety, and well-being of our members and staff," said Membership Benefits Program Administrator Scott Harms. "We thank you for your understanding."

- Sherry Halbrook



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Letters to the Editor

Will state offer retirement incentive?

To the Editor:

Is there any word on a rumor of a so-called retirement incentive for NYS workers? I heard something about three years of service time being added on.

DAVID WEITZ
Connelly

Editor's Note: Unfortunately, we are just entering this terrible economic and fiscal morass. Right now, your union is fighting for federal support for state operations and for the state to spread the financial burden so that everyone pays their fair share to fight this war on COVID-19.

The state is implementing a plan to reduce agency budgets by 10percent, but right now it is limited to a firm hiring freeze and a hold on all discretionary spending.

Your union is fighting to make sure all PEF members are able to continue to do their jobs and serve the public throughout this crisis. That said, if and when the state looks to reduce the state workforce, PEF will support and work for an early retirement incentive for use as a tool to achieve necessary savings AND to maintain the quality and continuity of state services.

Thanks, PEF, For masks

To the Editor:

On Monday, April 20, (PEF Director of Organizing) Dan Carpenter and (PEF Chief of Staff) Chris Leo coordinated for the delivery of masks to CDPC (Capital District Psychiatric Center) to help PEF members during this pandemic. Chris Leo even delivered them to the facility.

The CDPC members were overjoyed and extremely grateful to receive the masks!!!! They all expressed their gratitude that you and PEF were helping to look out for their safety during this difficult time. It reinforces their belief in PEF.

Thank you for the masks and brightening the members' days as they struggle to do their jobs or their redeployed jobs with new responsibilities. It is greatly appreciated by myself and by the members of CDPC.

Thank you again.

MARY HALTERMAN
Valatie



The Communicator

Email your letters to:
thecomunicator@pef.org



Stay safe, informed; don't panic or hoard! Take care of each other!

It's the second week in April and I am writing this column for May, we are currently practicing social distancing to fight the spread of coronavirus. New Yorkers have been on "pause" for several weeks because this virus is no joke it's not a "hoax." It has drastically changed our way of life and devastated our economy.

I try to stay informed so every day, and I watch Gov. Cuomo's morning briefings where he gives New Yorkers the facts and most current data on the coronavirus and "New York Pause." I also tune into the national news around 5 p.m. everyday to listen to President Trump.

In this time of record pandemic, economic and personal struggles we need to all work together, take responsibility for our actions and help each other. We are New York tough and we are all in this together. We need to help those who may be less fortunate than we are, we need to stay home, stay safe, stay informed and connect with others via social media networks until the pause is ended.

Regular connection with aging friends and family are more important than ever before. The coronavirus crisis has shown just how vulnerable our aging population is -- physically, psychologically and emotionally. The current social isolation will likely make a bad situation worse. We have more communication tools than ever before in history to provide for remote contact. But many isolated elderly individuals may not have ability or the knowledge and skills to access and use the technology for contact.

Additionally, communication technology is no substitute for the human touch. With many health care facilities barring visits, even from close family, there is great concern about the impact the sheltering-in-place requirements will have on the well-being of many individuals.

Do whatever you can to stay in touch with elderly friends and family in these difficult times. If they can manage the technology, by all means use email and video conferencing in these difficult times. At the very least, however, send them kind written notes and make regular sympathetic phone calls.

We are in the mist of one of the most serious crises in our lifetimes. Other than 9/11 this is the most serious crisis we have seen here in New York. The coronavirus pandemic challenges us to both survive and to ensure our humanity. This challenge is especially concerning to our retirees because 70 percent of the deaths from this virus occur in those over the age of 70 and many of those people have underlying health conditions, and 80 percent of the deaths of those under the age of 70 occur in people with underlying health conditions. So seniors are in a group of highest risk for death from COVID-19 (coronavirus).

We retirees are the wise Americans who have experienced life for longer than most, and we must resist the urge to panic. We must ensure the weakest among us are receive the care they need.

Payments of pensions and Social Security will continue unabated. Retirees will receive direct payments from the federal stimulus. Please consider helping your community. If you feel that you have plenty and don't need all of the stimulus money you receive, please consider donating some of it to someone less fortunate, your community food bank, or to the PEF Relief Fund.

Please remember during this New York on Pause time to practice social distancing at all times. Don't gather in groups, don't panic, don't hoard. The supply chain is intact and will not run out.

Remember to wash your hands and use hand sanitizer if you have it when soap and water are not available.

Unfortunately panic and fear have led to hoarding and scarcity of hand sanitizer and other simple things we all need. By refusing to panic and hoard, we can help alleviate this situation.

Stay safe, stay informed and help one another. "Together we are Stronger."





Union mourns loss of former PEF trustee

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

PEF members were shocked and saddened to learn of the death of former PEF Trustee Booker Ingram April 13. He was 79.

Ingram was an Army veteran and had been active in the PEF Veterans Committee. He was a strong PEF Region 11 political activist on Staten Island where he lived.

He was also active for PEF at the state Division of Human Rights where he was an information technology specialist before he retired. Ingram was active in the PEF Black Caucus, as well.

He served as a PEF trustee during Howard Shafer's administration in the early 1990s.

PEF staffer recognized by national group

By **KATE MOSTACCIO**

PEF staff member Meghan Keegan was recently recognized by the NLC (New Leaders Council) for her work as a union field representative serving public employees in New York state during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Unseen COVID-19 leaders may never make it to the front page of the newspaper or be highlighted on the evening news, but are making a real and lasting impact on their communities," the NLC wrote in its recognition of Keegan and others.

"Working for New York State Public Employees Federation (PEF), one New York state's major union representing state employees including all health care and emergency responders, Meghan Keegan (NLC National Curriculum Chair) has been fighting for safe working conditions across multiple state agencies including our prisons.

"New Leaders Council is proud of our fellows and alumni who are serving as local voices in their communities, leaders who are taking action to keep us healthy, well, and connected. These leaders will be there to rebuild what will be lost during this pandemic. These leaders will continue to focus on taking care of each other, not just themselves, in



Keegan said, "I was honored to be recognized for the work that we are doing to support safe working conditions for our members — an effort for a stronger community and a stronger nation — during this crisis. The bravery and commitment to serve the people of NY that our PEF membership has shown is truly awe inspiring."

Keegan was recently appointed a PEF field representative in Region 8 – the Capital District.



Ailing members need your leave donations

The following PEF members have reported a need for leave donations due to the need for medical treatment or recuperation from illness or injury.

Donations are made from annual leave and donors must retain at least 10 days of annual leave after donating. To donate leave to a specific person listed below, call the number after their name.

- **Stephen Bailey** is an information technology specialist 2 at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272;
- **Kimberly Benware** is a teaching and research center specialty nurse at SUNY Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse. Call 315-464-4943;
- **Marco Cardenas** is a parole officer at the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision parole office in Peekskill. Call 914-654-8690.
- **Brooke Dimare** is a social work supervisor 1 at Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center in Utica. Call 315-738-4424.
- **Theresa Fernandez** is a utility consumer assistance specialist 3 at the state Department of Public Service in New York City. Call 518-457-4272;
- **Marlene Garrett** is a teaching and research center nurse 2 at SUNY Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse. Call 315-464-4943;
- **Michael Mansky** is an offender rehabilitation coordinator at Greene Correctional Facility in Coxsackie. Call 518-731-2741;
- **Joseph Mbotchahawo** is an information technology specialist 2 at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272;
- **John Morano** is a vocational instructor 4 at Wende Correctional Facility in Alden. Call 716-937-4000;
- **Roxeen Mundy** is an information technology specialist 2 at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272;
- **Katherine Neely** is an associate psychologist at Buffalo Psychiatric Center in Buffalo. Call 716-816-2554;
- **Osayame Osemwegie** is a licensed master social worker 2 at NYC Children's Center's site in Brooklyn. Call 718-221-4500 ext. 3045;
- **Lucas Rathke** is an information technology specialist 2, programing at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272; and
- **Brian Squadere** is a senior accountant at the state Gaming Commission in Schenectady. Call 518-457-4272.

The rules for making and receiving leave donations (such as leave recipients may not have had any disciplinary actions or unsatisfactory performance evaluations within their last three years of state employment) are set forth on pages 181 and 182 of the 2016-19 PS&T Contract. If you, or a PEF member you know, need leave donations because of a medical issue, you may contact The Communicator to request publication of that need. Send requests to thecomunicator@pef.org, or call 800-342-4306, ext. 271. Be sure to provide your contact information.



Saluting members on their retirements

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

PEF's gratitude and best wishes go out to its members who are retiring and moving on to the next chapter of their lives. The union hopes they will join PEF Retirees and remain active and valued participants in the PEF family.

This month, we salute:

- **Sandra Davis**, PEF Division 267, Manhattan Psychiatric Center;
- **Lynda Johnaon**, PEF Division 371, Cayuga Correctional Facility;
- **Silvia Simmons**, PEF Division 179, state Office

Are you or PEF members you know retiring? Please send information for this column to thecomunicator@pef.org.



PEF members working at the Javits Center emergency Covid hospital in NYC



There are so many #PEF members working the frontlines during the #COVID19 pandemic. To all the workers who continue to provide essential services during this time and putting themselves last to helping those in need - we are eternally grateful for all that you do.



PEF Region 10 Coordinator Darlene Williams, Political Director Leah Gonzalez, Field rep George Fernandez and Assemblymember delivering lunch to #PEF parole officers. Delivering lunch to #PEF parole officers.



PEF Division 243 Council Leader Donna Karcz obtaining PPE for her members! #ProtectAllWorkers

PEF OPWDD Taconic Division 248 Nurses, Rebecca Mulder & Maryrose Baker transported an entire group home to a DOH site this morning and assisted with getting our individuals #COVID19 tested.





PEF VP Randi Haskell DiAntonio and Council Leader Stephanie McLean-Beathley met today to get face shields to PEF members in Region 1. #ProtectAllWorkers #GetUsPPE



"Photo of the Day: Healthcare Public Employee Federation members who are working at the Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn."

#PEF SUNY Downstate nurses highlighted in Governor Cuomo's daily #Coronavirus Update Newsletter!



PEF Division 337 getting their #PEF masks with Council Leader Jennifer Voelker. #ProtectOurRights #GetUsPPE



Second wave of nurses from SUNY Upstate Medical University arrive at Stony Brook University Hospital to provide much needed help in the fight against #Coronavirus!



Hanging #UnionStrong on the frontlines!! With Region 12 Coordinator Nora Geiser Higgins.
#EssentialWorkers #ProtectOurHeroes



Stony Brook University NICU -
#PEF members keeping covered



**PEF is now on
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