

Sisters and Brothers,

As you are all well aware the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is becoming a serious issue for all of us. It is my top priority to help educate and protect each and every one of our members. To that end we have updated our website with information that the Thruway, as well as CSEA, has released related to COVID-19 and the issues that we all face. I will continue to ask questions (to the items listed below and more) and get answers to you ASAP.

I also wanted to make you aware of other potential situations that could affect our members. Currently the Thruway is asking for volunteers from amongst our ranks to perform jobs related to COVID-19. I will address each situation below.

- 1) Members are being asked to volunteer to transport COVID-19 test samples across the state.
 - As of now the only members asked to do this are our Thruway Maintenance Supervisors.
 - Apparently Thruway equipment will be used to transport the samples
 - The Thruway has provided a Power Point Training presentation on this (Power point can be found on the COVID-19 page)

My stance on this is as follows – I cannot prevent you from volunteering for this job. I ask that you ask questions and educate yourself on this before you accept the assignment. Make sure you are properly trained and understand the dangers and issues associated with this type of work. Remember the Thruway has an obligation to make sure you are properly trained and provide the proper PPE to perform this task so that you are safe. Also, you want to make sure you know what your schedule will be, will overtime be paid or will this be a change in shift? What will happen if you can't make a shift or you contract the COVID-19 in the course of your duties.

- 2) Members are being asked to volunteer to transport nurses to different areas where the nurse will be entering homes and giving tests to people who potentially could test positive for COVID-19.
 - As of now this request went out to all members statewide.
 - Authority vehicles will be provided.
 - It is unknown at this time if there is training for this.

My stance is the same as number 1 – please see above

- 3) It is CSEA's understanding that some of our Maintenance Sections will be used as COVID-19 test sample collection sites.
 - I do not have any additional information on this. I am working on trying to get more information and will advise as soon as it becomes available.

- 4) Members are being asked to volunteer to work at the Wadsworth lab answering phones and doing data entry. Other labs around the State will more than likely start testing samples as well which mean more volunteers will be needed for this assignment.
- Originally CSEA was under the impression that this assignment was going to be mandatory for some of our members. This is not the case. The Thruway is asking for volunteers at this time.
 - Unknown if the Authority will provide transport to the lab
 - Unknown if any training is required for this assignment.

My stance on this is as follows – Same as number 1 above. Please remember that this is the main lab where all the samples being taken for the Coronavirus are being tested.

It is our understanding that there are contingency plans in place if any Thruway Employee is identified as having Coronavirus. The problem is that the damage will be done, and if a work unit is infected, it could present a critical breakdown of services for the Authority. Essential employees represent critical linchpins for the continued smooth operation of Authority business. They should be compensated as such, and we would do well not to forget this during negotiations. Furthermore, there are workers comp implications if one of our members should contract this disease while working in close proximity to nurses potentially testing people who may have the Coronavirus. Our members should be weary of signing any documents, acknowledgments, waivers or releasing any of their rights. Additionally, volunteers should keep a copy of all materials provided to you during all stages of the assignment. It is our position that any member injured by mistakes or shortcuts taken for the sake of expediency, will be made whole.

The people who are soliciting volunteers would not be putting themselves at risk, so take extra care when choosing to expose yourself to a potential pandemic respiratory virus. We cannot prevent you from volunteering for this assignment, but please exercise every precaution.

Presently, our Spring meetings are still on track to occur in late April. If there is a change we will notify you.

In Solidarity,

Michael Osborne – President Local 058