



July 9, 2020

To ESC Medical Professionals:

We write today with the following updates:

1. **Importance of Masking.** As you all know, we are seeing rising numbers of COVID-19 cases throughout California, and Governor Newsom has issued a statewide order that requires face coverings in public. Given the now-established fact that many cases of COVID-19 are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic, our union fully endorses the use of face coverings as a method to lessen the possibility of transmission of the virus.

We do this for others. Everyone is strongly encouraged to wear masks when they share work spaces with others, and to be particularly mindful of etiquette and safety protocols in break rooms, where masks may be removed in order to eat and drink.

We are aware of situations where members are experiencing discomfort with masks they are wearing at work. In some cases, our stewards and staff have worked with local management to find other solutions that make it easier to wear a face covering -- for example, face shields may be fitted with a cloth drape, such that a person's respiratory droplets can be contained without a mask.

We also remind members that you have the right to request that patients wear masks or other face coverings and that we expect management to enforce the statewide order.

Please reach out to your union representatives if you need assistance with any of these issues.

2. **Proper PPE.** Through the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions (CKPU), Local 20 continues to bargain with Kaiser in regard to the provision of appropriate PPE. There is currently a dispute about the re-use of industrial grade N-95 masks; while we do not believe this is an issue for our own members at the moment, we are working with UHW and OPEIU to ensure that KP complies with appropriate Cal OSHA standards. We also engage regularly with other medical employers to ensure stockpiles of PPE are in place. Let your stewards or union reps know if you have any trouble accessing appropriate PPE.
3. **"Reentry Bargaining."** Negotiations are ongoing at employers and facilities to set out safety protocols for the resumption of services. Sonoma County, for example, is working out detailed guidelines for over 15 office buildings and worksites where our members provide services to the public. Specific items include access to PPE, frequency of building cleanings, reducing density of occupied spaces through shift rotation, etc. (Sonoma County members: look for a detailed update soon!)

The Union has numerous agreements related to the "new normal" for care delivery. Please contact your steward or staff representative if you have questions about the content or implementation of these agreements.

4. **Petition to South Sacramento Kaiser Optometry.** Sadly, the management of Kaiser South Sacramento Optometry has refused to adopt patient care and safety standards that have been agreed to at every other Kaiser Optometry facility in the Northern California region.

Because of the urgency of this patient safety issue, over 250 Optometrists and Optometric Assistants now have called upon the local management at the facility to permit our union brothers and sisters to have the same allocation of time for cleaning of equipment in between patient visits that is afforded elsewhere in Kaiser's Northern California facilities. Many ODs provided detailed examples of why the sterilization of equipment and examination rooms requires a full 10 minutes between each patient visit.

KP management has just received this petition and we hope to be able to report very soon that this situation has been corrected. We thank our Optometry professionals for lending their support and voice to this effort.

5. **Extension of COVID-19 Positive Leave at Kaiser.** Thanks to pressure from the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, Kaiser management has agreed to reinstate a program that provides 80 hours of paid leave to workers who test COVID-positive. The program, which had lapsed in mid-June, is now back in force through September 30. Details are available [on our website](#).

In solidarity,

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