

Union ★
Update

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Local



For OPEIU Local 8 members at Behavioral Health Resources

April 20, 2020

We know this is a scary and stressful time. Please know, OPEIU is taking this pandemic very seriously. Your health and safety are very important to us. I have been in constant communication with your Ian Harrel and I have brought forward any concerns you have raised to me and I believe they have been resolved. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any concerns you may have.

Governor's Proclamation Protects High-Risk Workers

Gov. Jay Inslee issued a proclamation giving high-risk workers the right to protect themselves from COVID-19 without jeopardizing their employment status or loss of income.

The [proclamation](#) provides older workers and those with underlying health conditions a series of rights and protections, including:

- The choice of an alternative work assignment, including telework, alternative or remote work locations if feasible, and social distancing measures.
- The ability to use any accrued leave or unemployment benefits if an alternative work assignment is not feasible and the employee is unable to safely work. Employers must maintain health insurance benefits while high risk employees are off the job.

- Employers are prohibited from permanently replacing high-risk employees.

The CDC lists the following as high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19:

- [People 65 years and older](#)
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of all ages with [underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled](#), including:
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have serious heart conditions
 - People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
 - People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 - People with diabetes
 - People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - People with liver disease

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

If you are considered High-Risk under the CDC guidelines please protect yourself by reaching out to the HR Help Desk. Let them know you are High-Risk and that you need accommodations to work from home or you need to take leave and apply for unemployment under the emergency rule. You do not need to exhaust paid leave time before accessing unemployment, but in order to qualify you will need to have your medical provider provide you documentation that states you are considered High Risk under the CDC guidelines.

To apply for unemployment insurance benefits go to www.esd.wa.gov.

For additional information and resources visit the COVID-19 Information page on OPEIU Local 8's website, which contains valuable information to help you through the COVID-19 crisis. <https://www.opeiu8.org/Home/COVID-19Information.aspx>

Questions? Contact your Union Representative, Shelby Mooney, at 206-448-2615 or shelby@opeiu8.org.



OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 8

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