

Union ★
Update

OPEIU
Local



For OPEIU Local 8 members at Coastal Community Action Program

April 3, 2020

Message to Home Care Workers,

Please stay safe and make sure you are taking these precautions to keep you and your clients healthy.

How can you stay healthy during this pandemic?

Please be safe and diligent, taking precautions before you arrive and while in the home by performing continuous infection-control procedures, hand-washing and wiping surfaces, door knobs and practice 6-foot distancing. Regarding masks, although they say only the N95 is the safest way to protect yourself, they are finding that any mask or even a bandana that covers your nose and mouth that prevents you from touching your face, is a good first step in taking precaution. Please note this is only a recommendation; don't take this recommendation as the ultimate protection, they are learning new things about how this virus spreads daily.

Before each visit with your client perform a screening which includes asking the client the following

1. Are you experiencing the following: cough, fever breathing problems;
2. Have you been in close proximity with someone who is currently sick with COVID-19, or other respiratory illness within the last 14 days;

3. Is anyone in your household experiencing any of these symptoms or has been around anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

If your client answers yes to any of these questions and they are a hands-on client, tell them, for their safety and yours, you need to contact your supervisor on how to proceed.

When to provide care over the phone?

There has been confusion around the States new temporary rules that may allow caregivers to provide care without being present in some client's homes. This means you may be able to complete a telephonic visit and 'work from home' for some clients. Coastal CAP is leaving this up to the caregivers to decide whether they feel they can safely serve their client. If you feel your client would be best served over the phone, please contact your supervisor regarding your concerns.

Has the Union proposed hazard pay?

We have had several inquiries about Home Health Care Workers receiving Hazard Pay. This is a very understandable question and a true concern. As you are aware, your salary, in part, is decided at the state level as the State allocates funding to your agency. In order for your agency to be able to provide you with hazard pay this state funding needs to be approved at the state level; talks are occurring with the State to try to get additional funding approved.

What do I do if I have been laid off or my hours have been reduced because of COVID-19?

You should apply for Stand By Unemployment if you have been laid off. If your hours reduced you should apply for Partial Unemployment. In either case you will not be required to job search during this time.

<https://esd.wa.gov/unemployment>

What do I do if I am not going to meet my 80 hours a month for Health Care Coverage?

You will need to contact Zenith if your hours fall below 80; below is information we were provided on how to this.

Caregivers need apply once only for continuous coverage.

Timing/Coverage

- **First Month of Coverage Extension:** May 2020.
 - As a reminder, March hours earn May coverage.
 - We are extending May coverage because March will be the first month truly impacted by COVID-19.
- **There will be Continued Coverage:** May and June 2020
- **Retro-Enrollment:** We are asking caregivers to report their need within 45 days of the coverage month to ensure enrollment within the allowed period.

For timing issues, please call Zenith Customer Service at 1-866-770-1917, Option 1. Caregivers have to submit the online form by the deadlines below to ensure their enrollment in the months they need coverage.

Example:

Coverage Month	Deadline Form Submission
May	June 15, 2020
June	July 15, 2020

Confirmation

If you are not contacted after notifying Zenith through this online form, you can assume your continuous coverage has been approved for as long as continuous coverage is available. You can check your status on [My Plan](https://www.zenithadm.com/Participants/Participant.cfm?ClientName=SEIU775) <https://www.zenithadm.com/Participants/Participant.cfm?ClientName=SEIU775>

Questions

If you have questions or are not comfortable giving your Social Security number online, you can contact your Health Benefits Specialists (Zenith Customer Service) at 1-866-770-1917, Option 1.

Please direct additional questions to HBTAdmin@myseiubenefits.org

What if I am considered an Immune-compromised person because I am considered High Risk (pregnancy, over 65 years of age, weakened immune systems, or have underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung diseases)?

If this applies to you, you can self-quarantine and apply for unemployment under the Emergency rule. Contact your supervisor if you are High Risk and need to take leave, and you can also contact Shelby if you have questions about this.

<https://esd.wa.gov/unemployment>

If you need a letter for you mortgage lender, landlord, or other creditors stating financial hardship as result of reduced hours, contact your agency. The Union has provided them with a template letter to provide to you.

RESOURCES

OPEIU Local 8's website contains valuable information to help you through the COVID-19 crisis. Check our [COVID-19 Information](#) page.

<https://www.opeiu8.org/Home/COVID-19Information.aspx>

You may qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), called Basic Food in Washington State.

Your Basic Food benefits are based on your family size and income. Use the link below to the Basic Food online benefit estimator to see if you qualify during this time.

https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ESA/csd/documents/bfcalculator/bf_benefit_estimator.htm

Basic Food information:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/basic-food>

Questions? Contact Shelby Mooney, 206-448-2615, 800-600-2433 ext. 107 or Shelby@opeiu8.org.



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