

Union News and COVID-19 Update

Membership Meetings: The Local 701 Executive Board has decided to cancel the May and June Membership Meetings while the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Please continue to stay safe and remain healthy during this time.

Contract COVID-19 at work? We have been informed that the rules of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission have just been amended on an emergency basis to address first responders and other critical workers during the pandemic. Since our members are deemed as critical workers or "essential," should you unfortunately contract the virus, there will be a rebuttable presumption that they will be covered by the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act. The specific amendment can be viewed here. (LINK)

Local 701 Health & Welfare: The Welfare Fund Trustees are here to support you and your family during the Coronavirus ("COVID-19") global health emergency. **We are also actively working on your behalf to assure that you have additional health benefits on a temporary basis to cover your needs during this crisis.** We will continue to assist you and explore other means of relief on your behalf. **Please be advised these benefits apply to all eligible Active Participants, Pre-Medicare Retirees, and dependents covered under the Welfare Fund.**

COVID-19 Testing

If you and/or a dependent need to be tested for the coronavirus, **the Fund will cover 100% of the Reasonable and Customary Charge for testing** (for In Network and Out of Network providers) for COVID-19 without precertification and with no cost-sharing. **No copayment, no coinsurance, and no deductible will apply.**

The cost of the related office visit (including in-person and telehealth visits), urgent care clinic visit, or ER visit and any items and services provided during such visit (other than testing) will be subject to your annual deductible, co-pay and the Plan's coverage amounts.

No preauthorization is required for the testing. However, it must be medically necessary and consistent with the Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") guidance.

COVID-19 coverage commenced on March 18, 2020 and will remain in effect until otherwise directed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Begin by contacting your primary care provider, who will provide directions for obtaining a test, if necessary. You are encouraged to always use an in-network provider.

Telehealth Visits

If your provider offers telehealth services, we encourage you to take advantage of this service. You can save time and get the care you need without having to schedule a doctor's appointment or be exposed to other sick people while sitting in a doctor's waiting room.

The Fund will provide coverage for these telehealth visits just as they would an in-person office visit. The telehealth visit is subject to your annual deductible, co-pay, and the Plan's coverage amounts. This coverage commenced on March 20, 2020 and will remain in effect until June 30, 2020. At that time the coverage for telehealth visits will be reevaluated.

Telephysical Therapy Visits

If you are currently receiving physical therapy ("PT") and your facility or therapist offers teletherapy visits, the Trustees do not want you to stop your progress. You can continue your PT through a teletherapy visit if this is applicable to your condition. Physical therapy televisits will be treated as a regular visit and will be paid at the same benefit. Teletherapy visits will remain in effect until June 30, 2020. At that time the teletherapy visits will be reevaluated.

Teladoc

Teladoc is a vendor that provides telemedicine online or over the phone. Teladoc allows 24/7/365 access to care and prescriptions. Teladoc's services are free of charge to you and your covered dependents. Teladoc is available at www.teladoc.com, or by calling 1-800-835-2362, or by downloading their app that is available in the App Store.

Prescription Drugs

At this time, EmpiRx, Fund Prescription Benefit Manager, ("PBM") does not anticipate any delays in dispensing prescriptions. If there is a supply chain disruption, they are committed to partnering with you and your prescribing doctor to identify alternatives quickly. For now, continue to refill your prescriptions as you normally would.

If you are interested in having a short-term prescription delivered to your home, please contact your local pharmacy to learn if this service is offered. Also, please remember that if you are taking a maintenance prescription on a long-term basis, you can use the EmpiRx's Mail Order Program to have prescriptions delivered right to your door. Call **1-888-309-1654** for additional assistance.

Tips for general prevention

80% of people who contract the COVID-19 virus have either mild or no symptoms. Nonetheless, there are standard tips we should all take:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or cough into your arm by bending your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The CDC is the primary source for the latest updates on COVID-19. For the most current information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Labor pushes for COBRA coverage for laid off workers: We are pleased to report the Chicago Federation of Labor's (CFL) effort to fight for workers healthcare amidst the COVID-19 pandemic took a major step forward yesterday when the Worker Health Coverage Protection Act was unveiled in the U.S. House of Representatives. This act will cover the full cost of COBRA premiums for workers who receive health coverage through their employer and have been laid off, furloughed, or had their hours reduced. The bill provides up to 15 months of premium coverage and is available to workers covered by most employer health plans, including multiemployer plans, state and local government plans, the Federal Health Benefits Program, and private sector plans covered by ERISA.

Early on in this crisis, the CFL identified health coverage as a major issue that was not receiving enough attention in Washington. We developed a proposal for a COVID relief package that would include federally-subsidized COBRA payments for workers and have been championing this issue ever since. We held one-on-one calls with Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin to elevate our proposal, as well as with all U.S. Representatives covering Cook County. We also worked closely with the Mayor's and Governor's offices to help elevate our proposal to Speaker Pelosi.

In closing, we all need to continue to work together and to remain diligent to ensure that NO employer is using this pandemic for their own economic interest or selfish advancement. I can assure each of our members that everyone at Local 701 is working very hard on your behalf during this crisis. We've endured some difficult times in years past, and we shall overcome this as well. Please be safe, work safe and take every precaution for yourself and your family members. We will get through this together.