

Sisters and Brothers,

Local 701 continues to closely monitor this constantly changing COVID-19 pandemic as our number one priority is your safety as well as the safety of your family. The news surrounding this outbreak seems to change by the hour which draws concern from our members and their families. For that reason, you must practice safe procedures at work. My previous correspondences reference what to do if your employer is not providing a safe work environment for you. I encourage you to exercise every necessary precaution to ensure your safety. Your Union is working very hard to ensure you continue to work to provide for you and your family. There have been several of our members who have, unfortunately, been laid off work as a result of the pandemic.

I'd again like to commend each and every one of our members for rising to the challenges we're being confronted with. I am extremely proud of each one of our members for your courageous actions fixing the vehicles that deliver the goods, the medication and the supplies to ensure our communities continue to function forward. Our work is too often taken for granted. It's through your hard work and resilience though that each of you should rightfully be commended.

**If you are laid off:**

There is economic assistance. You can apply for unemployment insurance if you're without access to paid sick leave or unable to work because of COVID-19. Call IDES at 1-800-244-5631 or visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/ides>.

**If you have been quarantined by your physician you may qualify for disability under our Local 701 insurance policy (if you are receiving unemployment or any other form(s) of pay you cannot receive this benefit).**

The Union is here to help as well. Anyone who is in financial distress can submit a letter of request to the Local 701 Neediest Family Fund explaining your current situation. All requests are confidential as always. Based on your need, you may receive up to \$300 in a Jewel gift card as the donated funds have a limited amount in the Fund. If you are in a position to donate to the Neediest Family Fund to assist those in need now, please forward your donations to the Union Hall. Make checks payable to the Local 701 Neediest Family Fund.

**Insurance:**

There have been questions from a few of our members regarding when their insurance coverage ends if they are laid off. As a reminder how our Plan actually works, each year you receive four "grace weeks" of coverage. If you are laid off, quit, terminated, or on strike where the Fund Office received no contributions on your behalf during that four-week period, your coverage for benefits are extended during those four weeks, called grace weeks.

The extension of coverage is limited by virtue of how the Plan is written to allow four grace weeks in a calendar year. After this extension period ends, you will have the option to elect COBRA coverage. If you do not elect COBRA coverage you will have to re-establish eligibility before you are again covered under our Plan.

If you are unfortunately laid off for the entire four-week period and use up all your grace weeks for this year, there will be some inconveniences, but rest assured, you will have coverage. The inconvenience part is having to resubmit your claim after the 10th of the following month for your coverage. Why the 10th? That is when the contributions are due on your behalf from your employer from the previous month as we bill in arrears. When a participant doesn't use their grace weeks, the Fund Office utilizes the four-week period to cover your eligibility much like overlap coverage. When you use your grace weeks there is no overlap and the Fund Office must rely on your coverage based on whether or not your employer paid for the week(s) you incurred the claim in the previous month. In this case, the following month's contribution covers the previous month's claim. In the interim, the confusion is whether or not you have coverage. You do have coverage once the contribution is received and posted at the Fund Office after the 10th. After the 10th, simply resubmit the bill, or receipt if you paid out of pocket, for reimbursement or coverage.

**For Example:** If an employee is laid-off, quit, is terminated, or is off work for any reason, their coverage for benefits will be extended up to four weeks (grace weeks) after employer contributions end. **This extension of coverage is limited to four weeks in a calendar year.** Grace weeks do not carry over from one year to the next. In addition, the employee must re-establish eligibility before a new calendar's grace weeks are made available.

We ask that you please be patient understanding how your Plan functions. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact your Business Representative or the Fund Office. **For those covered under the Local 701 Health Plan – this is a great opportunity to utilize the Teladoc benefit should you require any medical assistance.**

**Union and Fund Offices are closed to the public:**

As a reminder, the Union Office and the Fund Office needs to continue to function on your behalf. Your health and welfare claims need to continue to be paid, pension checks need to continue to be issued to our retirees, our representational duties will continue as advocates for our members during their time of need, dues need to continue to be processed, etc. As such, to continue to function and to minimize the risk of cross contamination or having any one of our staff employees contracting the virus, our Carol Stream and Burr Ridge offices will be closed to the public. Should you need anything from either office, please contact the appropriate entity to conduct your essential business via phone, email or postal mail to avoid having any of our employees contaminated which would result in our other members being adversely affected. The Union Hall number is (708) 482-1720, the Welfare Fund Office is (708) 482-0110 and the Pension Fund Office is (708) 482-0220.

**Please also be advised that the Monthly Membership Meetings have been cancelled while the pandemic continues.** We have received dispensation through International President Bob Martinez to cancel the April meeting and any future meeting(s) should the covid-19 pandemic continue. We will keep you posted moving forward of any changes as a result of this ever-changing pandemic.

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.

In Solidarity,

SamCicinelli

Directing Business Representative / Organizer