To ESC Medical Professionals:

The Union is working on many fronts to address the urgent issues facing our members in health care fields. Below are reports on a few high-priority issues.

1. Model Employer Proposal/Pay Continuation for Members Unable to Work. As you all know, health care workers are exempt from the "shelter-in-place" mandate now in force in California. Our employers can still require members to work and are taking the position that all workers are essential. Our Union's position is that workers should not be penalized for circumstances beyond anyone's control or put into circumstances that will worsen this public health emergency, unless there is truly urgent need and all safety precautions have been taken on the job.

ESC Local 20 was able to move PG&E (also a workforce of essential workers) to provide "time off with permission with pay" for workers who cannot be at work, due to school closures, care for elders, or to manage self-quarantines. Other employers in our area also have established more generous paid leave for workers impacted by this crisis, for example: Stanford University, the University of California, and Verizon. Another health care employer, Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland, has granted all employees a bank of 128 hours to be used for unavoidable absences related to the COVID-19 pandemic. For a summary of Model Employer Policies see the ESC research document linked here.

ESC Local 20 has sent a demand to Kaiser to bargain over paid leave policies that cites all of these examples and we will call upon all of our health care employers to be Model Employers in this time of crisis. Similar demands to bargain are being submitted as needed for other medical employers, including HCA and Sutter.

2. Guidance for Per-Diem/Casual/On-Call Employees. We are seeing situations develop at our medical employers where normal workloads are drying up in health care. If you are losing income because of lost hours, you can apply for Unemployment Insurance for partial income replacement. Guidance is here: https://edd.ca.gov/Unemployment/Filing_a_Claim.htm

Your contract will determine your employer's obligation to continue medical benefits, if your benefits eligibility is tied to hours worked. ESC Local 20 will advocate for continuation of benefits in all circumstances and is working to get clarity from our employers.

In addition, as we discuss alternate work to address the reduction in census, we are advocating that On-Call/Per Diem/Casual employees be offered such work.

Please contact your staff representative if you have questions about your particular situation.

3. Remote work and deployments. The Union continues to press for remote work arrangements whenever possible, in accordance with urgent government public health directives to maintain social distancing. We also are in negotiations for appropriate redeployments of our members. It is the Union's position that appropriate redeployments are those that ensure a safe work environment, provide training, and are voluntary.

4. Resources for all workers. We know that our members have family and friends who are facing difficult situations related to their jobs or who have lost work. The California Labor Federation, the umbrella organization for the labor movement in our state, is maintaining a very useful resource page. Please share with anyone you know who is in need of help -- on the job or with job loss -- at this time: https://calaborfed.org/covid-19-outbreak-resources-and-information-for-workers/

We are working as fast as possible to identify issues and offer advice during this time of rapid change. We are in the midst of creating a resource page for our website and the Union will issue a FAQ soon with guidance for members on issues of common concern. As always, if you need assistance, contact your union representative.

In solidarity,

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