



COVID-19 UPDATES: WORKERS' COMP EXPLAINED; SHARE YOUR STORY

- There have been 184 cases confirmed among MDOC staff and 499 among inmates. [See MDOC's latest numbers.](#)

- **We have heard some personnel offices may be telling members they cannot file a workers' compensation claim after testing positive for COVID-19. This is not true. You are entitled to file a claim.**

Personnel offices may have told members that corrections staff are exempt from an [emergency rule](#) that generally allows first responders to get workers' comp benefits if they are diagnosed with the virus. This is false.

Here's what's actually going on: corrections staff are excluded from the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), which provides emergency sick leave to workers. This act has nothing to do with workers' comp, but this seems to be the source of the confusion.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, insist upon filing a worker's comp claim. Stand firm. If your personnel office says no, the MCO Legal Department needs to know. Email details to legal@mco-seiu.org. Include details such as who wouldn't allow you to apply for worker's comp; when you were

denied; explanation given; etc.

- We are still **asking members who have tested positive to contact our outside law firm.** Call The Law Offices of Charters, Tyler, Zack & Shearer, P. C. at (248) 321-4474. Advise them that you are a state corrections officer and contracted the virus. They will screen your case to determine if you are entitled to benefits. Please fill out the [MCO Legal Department's reporting form](#), then call the law office.

- This week, **MCO leaders spoke with legislators** about the lack of proper protective equipment (such as N-95 masks), the need to restore leave credits for COs who have been ordered to quarantine, and other issues. [Read the full story online.](#)

- We have heard some MCO members are living in campers or hotels to avoid bringing COVID-19 home to their families. **If you have made alternate living arrangements, or have made the tough decision to distance yourself from your loved ones, MCO wants to hear your story.** Email a few paragraphs and photos to MCO Communications Director Anita Lloyd at anita@mco-seiu.org.

Thank you and stay safe!

GOV. APPOINTS CARY JOHNSON TO REPRESENT COs ON SUICIDE PREVENTION COMMISSION

MCO Recording Secretary Cary Johnson has been appointed to the governor's Suicide Prevention Commission.

Johnson, of JCF, will represent corrections officers on the commission. Johnson has led MCO's efforts to raise awareness of PTSD and suicide among corrections staff and find solutions. She is one of several appointees to the commission by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

The Suicide Prevention Commission was created as a result of [SB 228](#), passed last December. MCO leaders and staff pushed hard to get the bill passed and for the appointment of a corrections officer.

The commission will work with state departments, agencies, and nonprofit organizations to research the causes and possible underlying factors of suicide in Michigan, the governor's office said.

The suicide rate of both Michigan and the US has surged 30 percent since 2000, according to the bill's analysis. The suicide rate among Michigan corrections officers is higher than that of the U.S. overall.

[Read more on the MCO website.](#)

COLLEGE DEBT AND ACADEMY REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAMS OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS NOW

Again this year, MCO is offering programs to help members who took out college loans or who paid out of pocket for the academy.

The Academy Assistance Program will disperse 20 awards of \$500 each to current MCO members who paid out of pocket or took on debt to get their corrections training at a community college in 2014 or 2015. Switching to community

colleges for training was a failed experiment, and MDOC returned to the paid academies in 2015.

The Student Debt Assistance Program will award 20 grants of \$500 each to current MCO members who have student loans from earning an undergraduate degree.

The deadline to apply for either program is Sept. 1. Award winners will be

selected by random drawing. Full details on both, including how to apply, are [on our website](#).

MCO also offers free online college and the MCO Scholarship program. Our free online college can help recruits get the credits they need for MDOC employment. Details on these programs is on the [college affordability page](#) on the MCO website.