

We're United for Patient and Staff Safety

We took emergency action with union members from WFSE, SEIU 925, WSNA and UWAH to tell the University of Washington to stop prioritizing the bottom line over our patients. We showed up to speak out because UW Medicine has decided to “honor” our work and sacrifices by rolling back COVID-19 protections for healthcare workers and embarking on a potentially unsafe furlough that could impact patient care.

We recognize that COVID-19 is impacting businesses across the nation, and employers are having to make hard choices. UW is not just any business, though — we are the institution our community trusts to care for them in their greatest time of need. The staffing cuts and furloughs administration wants to force upon us and patients could put our community's safety at risk. The public trusts us, the frontline caregivers, in what is best for their care. UW should trust us, too. We need to have a say in our patients' care to ensure their safety and ours.

UW needs to show they care more about our patients' and staff safety than the bottom line by agreeing to implement COVID-19 protections and by ensuring furloughs don't impact the quality of care we provide.



“For months, we’ve willingly put our own health on the line to care for patients and potentially be exposed to this devastating disease. We

understand there may be a need for furloughs. But they must be done in an equitable way, and patient safety must not be sacrificed for the sake of UW's bottom line.” **Grace Yang, RN, IR, SEIU 1199NW Executive Board Member**



“I took this action because my employer, the University of Washington, is ending our worker COVID-19 protections today, and that

makes me scared and even more stressed. In order to best serve our patients and communities, we need the ability to continue protecting ourselves, and that includes protecting those co-workers that are at-risk and making sure all our jobs are protected. Seeing so many co-workers from the various units and areas of the hospital and all the unions join together to take part in today's action was empowering. In these unprecedented and fearful times, it was good to see so many co-workers come together, and forcefully tell UW that we need our protections to continue.” **Saul Hudacin, Harborview Pharmacy Tech**

We united for COVID-19 deployment pay!



We stand in unity and solidarity! We marched on Executive Director Paul Hayes to demand equality and justice for our colleagues whose home units are 2W, 4E, TICU, Float Pool, and everywhere where our co-workers are caring for COVID-19 patients without COVID-19 deployment pay. We sent a strong message: We are the healthcare professionals who are caring for our COVID-19 patients and we have earned the COVID-19 deployment premiums. Stay tuned for updates on our COVID-19 Deployment Premium grievance.

Information Is Power

Why is the University of Washington willfully ignoring our contract?

- The UW has decided, in this moment of crisis, to prioritize the bottom line over our rights and safety. Instead of choosing to do the right (and legal) thing, they are putting profits over patients.
- The UW also wants to impose their plans quickly to start saving money immediately and not take the time to bargain the impacts their bad decisions are having on our lives.

What is the difference between layoff and furlough?

- These are not precisely defined terms, but generally layoff indicates a separation from employment (e.g. an employer is downsizing and lays off some of its staff), whereas a furlough generally means the employment relationship continues, but the furloughed employees are either on reduced schedules or completely away from work for some period of time.

Will I be able to receive unemployment benefits if I am on complete furlough for a full week?

- If you work zero hours during a week due to COVID-19 impacting your employer, you can receive unemployment benefits. The weekly benefit amount will be calculated based on the earnings over the course of your “base year”, with a maximum weekly benefit of \$790. You will also receive an additional \$600 per week for each week in which you receive any weekly benefits through the end of July 2020, through the Federal CARES Act.

Will I be able to receive unemployment benefits if I have a reduction in hours?

- It depends on how many hours you are working. If your hours are reduced, you may qualify for Partial Unemployment, but your weekly benefits will be reduced based on the amount you continue to earn (called an “Earnings Deduction”). Unless you are working a greatly reduced schedule, it is likely the “Earnings Deduction” will offset the full amount of your weekly benefit and you will not receive any weekly benefit, in which case you also will not receive the \$600 supplement through CARES. If your Earnings Deduction is smaller than your weekly benefit, you will still receive the remaining portion of your weekly benefit plus the \$600 weekly supplement through CARES.

What are our rights when being furloughed?

- We have the right to bargain the impacts of being furloughed when they are announced. UW, although they want to, cannot impose furloughs legally unless they bargain in good faith the impacts of their actions with us. We have the right to bargain for job security, no loss of healthcare benefits, a process that is fair and equitable (including using a racial justice lens), and a process that guarantees patient safety.
- UW management cannot independently impose a furlough plan on us. If a manager or supervisor approaches you with a furlough plan — that is called ‘Direct Dealing’ and is illegal. We first have to have a bargained agreement with the university.

What happens if a manager approaches me and asks and/or demands that I make a furlough plan with them?

- Document conversations with management about furloughs and send communication to your delegate or organizer or to ambers@seiu1199nw.org. DO NOT agree to anything until you talk to your delegate or organizer.
- When sending communication to your delegate or organizer, include: Who said what? When did they say it? And who was present to witness it?

What are new federal laws expanding unemployment insurance during the pandemic?

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES): Congress significantly expanded availability of unemployment benefits in several ways: [View benefits chart online](#)
 - o Under the CARES Act, we don’t have to be actively seeking work to qualify for unemployment, meaning those of us furloughed or temporarily laid off could draw unemployment.
 - o Through July 1, the Federal government is funding an additional \$600 per week in addition to unemployment benefits.
 - o While unemployment benefits are normally available for up to 26 weeks, this law expands that, so unemployment may now be available up to 39 weeks (approximately 9 months), through December 31, 2020.

| 1199NW Member Scenario | PFMLA | L&I | UI | FFCRA* | CARES |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Low Census | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Department Closed No other work available | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Department Closed Rejected offered work | | | Depends why rejected | | Depends why rejected |
| Per Diem Not receiving typical hours | | | ✓ | | Probably |
| Immunocompromised | Possibly. If you're able to work use UI | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Dependent is immunocompromised | Possibly | | | | ✓ |
| Quarantined | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Sick with COVID-19 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Child Care absences | | | Depends on if you can work e.g. remotely | ✓ | If Primary Caregiver and cannot work remotely |

*FFCRA is only applicable to private employers with under 500 employees and public employers

What is the difference between unemployment/UI and CARES?

- The state offers unemployment benefits to individuals in certain circumstances, and the Federal CARES Act has created the opportunity for people in a number of additional circumstances to receive unemployment benefits as well. The application process for either goes through the same state agency and the benefits received would be considered unemployment, whether the individual qualifies through the state eligibility rules or the CARES eligibility rules.

When does my unemployment begin?

- Washington has waived the one-week waiting period, so benefits should begin as of the date you apply.

How do unemployment benefits work for on-call or per diem employees?

- ESD will have to evaluate on a case-by-case basis, but if you have experienced a reduction in work due to COVID-19, you should be able to receive a prorated amount of unemployment benefits to offset the lost income.
- If you have been temporarily or permanently laid off due to COVID-19, then you should be eligible for unemployment and the amount of benefit will be calculated using your income during your base year.

Where can I find additional resources about benefits and financial assistance?

[Financial Resources for Washington Residents Impacted by COVID-19](#)

[Economic Security Department: COVID-19 Scenarios & Benefits Available](#)

[Economic Security Department: CARES Act Flow Chart](#)

