



New York State
**PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
FEDERATION AFL-CIO**
1168-70 Troy-Schenectady Road
P.O. Box 12414
Albany, NY 12212-2414

(518) 785-1900
(800) 342-4306
Fax (518) 785-1814

OFFICERS:

March 30, 2020

Wayne Spence
President

Kay Alison Wilkie
Secretary-Treasurer

Adreina Adams
Sharon V. DeSilva
Randi DiAntonio
Vice Presidents

Anthony Annucci, Acting Commissioner
NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
1220 Washington Avenue, Building 9
Albany, NY 12226

**REGIONAL
COORDINATORS:**

Michele Silsby
Region 1

Andrew Puleo
Region 2

Colleen Williams
Region 3

Roberta (Bobbi) Stafford
Region 4

David Dubofsky
Region 5

Jeanette St. Mary
Region 6

Virginia (Gini) Davey
Region 7

Michael Blue
Region 8

Diane Jaulus
Region 9

Darlene Williams
Region 10

Bernadette O'Connor
Region 11

Nora Higgins
Region 12

TRUSTEES:

Christopher Buman
Jeanette Santos
Maddie Shannon-Roberts

Dear Acting Commissioner Annucci,

As Governor Cuomo stated, “this is a new war that no one has seen before.” There is much we don’t know about this new virus sweeping across the world. However, we do know New York is the epicenter for the Coronavirus outbreak and we are in the escalating phase of this very serious pandemic. In prisons and elsewhere, it will only get worse before it gets better. We are allies in this war, fighting against the same evil that is infecting and killing so many worldwide. We need to work together to secure the well-being of the 5,000 PEF members who work for the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.

During this crisis, we need to have the strength to make extremely difficult, or even at times, unpopular decisions. I write to you, to again ask, that the Department go above and beyond the ever-changing CDC and NYS DOH minimal guidelines when it comes wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), just as your staff goes above and beyond for the people of New York everyday of this crisis. As Commissioner for one of the largest correctional networks in the country, with an operating budget of over a \$3 billion, my ask is simple; allow staff the option to wear PPEs as they conduct their essential work functions, while the rest of us are hunkered down in our homes keeping our families safe. As you are well aware, the CDC or the DOH guidelines do not in way prohibit employees from wearing PPEs at work. I do not see a valid reason for the Department to deny the use of PPEs. NYC DOC recently allowed correctional staff to wear N-95 respirators, surgical masks, and gloves while in facilities. As you know, I even offered to purchase and supply surgical masks to my members.





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Last night I received an email from a member who works in a prison. In her email, I could actually feel the desperation in her words; it was a plea for help. The plea was not for her but was for her two month old baby girl who, just two weeks ago, was released from the NICU. She was born premature and still suffers from a deceased lung capacity. Unfortunately, and heartbreaking, I've received many similar emails over the past two weeks. Members are not afraid for themselves but for their loved ones. Elderly parents to whom they unselfishly provide care, spouses who are undergoing various forms of cancer treatments and children who have autoimmune, cancers and other diseases. Yet they go to work everyday putting themselves and their loved ones at risk.

The COVID-19 positive cases within DOCCS are skyrocketing and my members, through their selfless service, are getting sick. For years, these same individuals, both within the prison walls and out in the community have been protecting New Yorkers. We must protect them.

During this pandemic we have worked together. We thank you for taking action including, suspending visiting hours, parole reports, inmate transfers, teaching and vocational classes and drug and urine testing. Let's build on those successes by ensuring our members have the option to wear PPE, and protect themselves and their families.

Thank you and I am always available to discuss this request and any other issues related to this pandemic and PEF members working for the Department.

Sincerely,

Wayne Spence

President

NYS Public Employees Federation

cc: Daniel Martuscello, DOCCS
Robert Mujica, DOB
Renee Delgado, PEF

