

**RE: Support and Expand the Healthcare Workforce Bonuses Program**

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and a state employee represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I ask you to support the new healthcare worker bonus program the Governor has included in her Executive Budget proposal (S.8007/A.9007 Part D). It is crucial that this bonus program not only be approved, but also expanded to all state workers who were deemed “essential” and went to work every day during the pandemic, often working mandated overtime, while many other employees were allowed to work from home.

This program would provide up to \$3,000 for health and mental hygiene workers in the public and private sectors who earn up to \$100,000 annually. The payments would be made in two installments by the employer, based on length of employment. The bonus would also serve as a retention and recruitment incentive for some hard-to-fill state positions.

While this program is a good start for many who worked throughout the pandemic, it only includes a fraction of the individuals who worked tirelessly every day to meet the needs of New Yorkers. Additionally, this proposal may provide extra state-funded bonuses to some private sector workers who already received hazard pay bonuses from their employers, while many state employees who were designated as “essential employees” and who put themselves at risk serving in front-facing roles continue to be ignored.

From ensuring unemployment benefits distribution to providing COVID-19 testing and so many others, thousands of state workers risked their own health and their family’s health to provide these critical services. If enacted as proposed, the state would be providing financial recognition to thousands of private sector employees without recognizing our own state employees who worked more than 19 million hours of overtime delivering critical services in 2020.

As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you work with the leadership in your house to include the healthcare workforce bonus in the final budget and expand it to all essential state employees. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,

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