



## President's Corner

By Rowena Blackman-Stroud

Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season. Along with rest of the Downstate Chapter officers, I wish you and your families all the best for 2020.

I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on several issues of importance to all UUP members.

### **DSI funds**

Under the 2016-22 NYS/UUP contract, members are eligible to receive discretionary salary increases. For this round of DSI, eligible members will receive a flat payment of approximately \$550 added to their base salaries retroactive to July 1, 2019.

Part-time eligible members will receive a pro-rated amount based on their part-time percentage. Those monies will be paid in their February 5 paychecks. We worked with Human Resources to make this happen.

Hopefully, the DSI funds—which are payments added to base salary—will help members partially cover commuter expenses, parking costs or other expenditures. The new parking fees at Downstate went into effect January 1.

Members receiving salary compression payments will receive their money in their February 5 paycheck. The payments are retroactive to July 1, 2019. This historic benefit was negotiated by UUP and is in the union's 2016-22 contract with the state.

UUP released a two-page flier, "2019 Salary Compression: Analysis and Distribution," in November. The flier is on the UUP website, at <https://uupinfo.org/contract/pdf/CompressionFastFactsNov2019.pdf>.

I will share more details about salary compression at our January 21 chapter meeting.

### **Advocating for Downstate**

Your Downstate Chapter leaders have been strongly advocating for Downstate and SUNY's other public academic medical centers. In October, I joined UUP President Fred Kowal and other UUP members at a Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education hearing in Brooklyn to close the TAP Gap and increase state funding to SUNY.

I provided testimony at the hearing that called for more funding for SUNY's public academic medical centers, including the restoration of the state subsidy for the hospitals that was cut from the 2018-19 state budget.

In December, UUP President Fred Kowal and NYSUT President Andy Pallotta sent a letter to the governor detailing the need for more funding for Downstate and SUNY's public academic medical centers hospitals in Stony Brook and Syracuse.

In the letter, President Kowal asks for the restoration of the state-funded \$87 million subsidy for the hospitals. The elimination of the subsidy in 2018 has "left the hospitals at risk of failing should these funds not be restored," he wrote.

UUP will be advocating for more state dollars for Downstate's academics medical center, as part of the union's legislative agenda for 2020-21. Closing the TAP Gap and advocating for a law that requires financial transparency at SUNY's campus foundations are also goals for UUP during the budget season.

In 2019, I made several trips to Washington, D.C. with President Kowal and presidents representing the Stony Brook HSC and Upstate Medical University chapters to advocate for the continuation of federal Medicaid DSH payments. SUNY's public hospitals rely on federal and state DSH payments to provide vital health care services to all who walk through their doors.

In December, Congress passed a bill that would delay DSH cuts until May 2020. We must continue to advocate to end these proposed cuts and make DSH payments permanent.

We can't do this alone. We need your help if we are to be successful. I encourage all Downstate Chapter members to make appointments to meet their legislators in their district offices. This is a highly effective way to advocate for UUP, for SUNY and for Downstate.

If you require more information, simply go to the UUP Downstate Chapter website, at <http://uuphost.org/downstatemedicalcenter/> or call the UUP office at (718) 270-1519.

