



the Downstate Update

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Rowena Blackman-Stroud

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DOWNSTATE BOOSTER SHOT VACCINATION CLINIC IS OPEN

UUP successfully advocated for access to booster shots on campus. Booster shots are available at SUNY Downstate this week for employees, residents, and students.

The Downstate booster vaccination clinic is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily through Friday, Feb. 18 in the main dining area of the cafeteria.

Please schedule your appointment.

Per CDC guidelines, if you initially received Pfizer or Moderna, you are eligible for a booster five months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series. You can get either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

If you initially received the Johnson and Johnson's vaccine, you are eligible for a booster two months after the primary dose. The CDC recommends getting either the Pfizer or Moderna booster.

Once you schedule your appointment, you will receive an email confirmation. Check your spam folder if you do not receive confirmation.

Please arrive on time for your appointment with your SUNY Downstate ID. As with the previous doses, expect to remain for a 15-minute observation period.

After you receive your booster shot, please upload your documentation. You can also bring your information in person to the Student/Employee Health Services.

If you are not yet eligible to receive a booster shot, please get the shot within 30 days of being eligible for it. Anyone seeking a medical exemption should email ADA@downstate.edu with an application by Feb 21.

GET INVOLVED! TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS TO FUND SUNY DOWNSTATE!

Once again, there is no state funding for subsidies for SUNY Downstate and SUNY's public teaching hospitals in the governor's 2022-2023 executive budget proposal.

We can change this, but it will take all of us to do that.

We need you to become involved in our chapter's advocacy efforts and help us send a strong message to our legislators that the state must invest in SUNY Downstate.

Certainly, we do not need to be reminded of how difficult it was during the early days of the pandemic in 2020, when our hospital was the only hospital in the state designated as a COVID-only facility. That designation took its toll on all of us, physically and mentally. And it hurt our hospital financially because the designation essentially served as an unfunded mandate from the state on SUNY Downstate.

The financial impact on SUNY Downstate due to COVID is a net loss of \$159 million. The return of non-essential surgeries and services, such as diagnostics and maternal care that generate revenue, have been slow to return to Downstate. Our patient admissions are down, our surgeries are down and our newborn deliveries are down.

Also, SUNY Downstate received the least amount of federal aid of the three SUNY hospitals despite being a COVID-only hospital during the early phase of the pandemic, a period when less was known about the virus or how to best treat it.

Now, SUNY Downstate is required to pay back \$16.6 million in federal relief funding by the end of 2022. And while the proposed state budget includes \$50 million for capital improvements at SUNY Downstate, the hospital will not be able to spend it because it cannot afford to take on any more debt. This is a direct result of a lack of debt service relief from the state Division of Budget.

The time is now for us to come together and tell our elected officials to reinstate the subsidies to SUNY Downstate and SUNY's other public teaching hospitals. It is time for the state to invest in SUNY.

You can do that by sending an e-letter urging the Senate and Assembly to fund the state subsidy for SUNY Downstate and SUNY's other public teaching hospitals.

Click [HERE](#) to send the letter. You can also find a link to the letter on the UUP website, at <https://uupinfo.org/>.

UUP BLACK HISTORY MONTH PANEL SERIES FEATURES SUNY DOWNSTATE DOCTOR

Dr. Camille Clare, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at SUNY Downstate, is one of the health care experts who will speak on the importance of why Black Americans should get vaccinated against COVID-19.

The online panel discussion, titled "Why Black America Should Get

Vaccinated Against COVID-19," will be held from noon to 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 15.

The hour-long talk will start at noon. UUP President Fred Kowal will host the discussion.

Dr. Gregory Threatte, Professor Emeritus of Pathology at Upstate Medical University, is also on the panel. A UUP retiree, he is Trustee Emeritus for Colgate University and is a Trustee for The Commonwealth Medical College.

Dr. Clare is a Professor at the College of Medicine and the School of Public Health.

Click [HERE](#) to register for the panel discussion.

UUP's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, which is hosting the series, is also holding a Feb. 22 discussion on racial injustice affects on health, the environment and economy in communities of color. Click [HERE](#) to register for that forum.

UUP TELLS STATE TO FUND SUNY HOSPITALS AND CAMPUSES AT FEB. 7 PRESS CONFERENCE

UUP, along with an impressive gathering of lawmakers and other public higher education advocates, made an impassioned case for a stronger higher education budget during a morning press conference in the Capitol on Feb. 7.

That afternoon, Kowal testified before a joint hearing by the state Senate and Assembly higher education committees.

Kowal and Professional Staff Congress/CUNY President James Davis called on the state to increase funding to SUNY and CUNY by more than \$250 million for each system.

"We want to make this the year where we turn the page on austerity once and for all, and make SUNY the leader that New Yorkers need," Kowal said during the press conference.

Also at the press event were: Carolyn Kube, UUP's statewide Vice President for Professionals; Tom Hoey, the Statewide Membership Development Officer; nine

members of the Senate and Assembly; and several other advocates of public higher education, including Blair Horner, Executive Director of the New York State Public Interest Research Group.

You can read more about the press conference and testimony on the UUP website, [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

SIGN UP FOR UUP STUDENT DEBT CLINICS

UUP regularly offers virtual student debt clinics to help members navigate the federal public service forgiveness program and learn more about income-driven repayment plans.

Statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee leads the clinics.

All clinics are on Wednesdays. The next clinics are set for:

- March 2, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- March 16, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- March 30, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- April 13, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- April 27, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Click [HERE](#) to register for one of the above dates.

HELP FOR PEOPLE PAYING MULTIPLE STUDENT LOANS

Federal Student Aid has made it easier for people paying off a Parent Plus loan and a second student loan.

When borrowers consolidate the loans, FSA will set the number of remaining payments on the new loan based on the oldest loan. So, if you consolidate two loans, you will have the same number of payments remaining as on your oldest loan.

Borrowers with two different types of loans—for instance, loans for undergraduate and graduate school or one for their own education plus Parent Plus loans for their child or children—are eligible for the program.

Contact UUP Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee at jobryan@uupmail.org.

FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN UPDATES

Close to 70,000 student borrowers have had some or all of their loans forgiven under the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. And more than one million borrowers can benefit from recent changes to the PSLF Program.

You may be one of them.

Beginning this month, many student borrowers will see updated payment counts in their loan payment accounts. Federal Student Aid and your PSLF servicer are working hard to monitor accounts to ensure borrowers get credit for progress they have made.

The work will be done in phases, and it may take several months before everything is settled. If your payment count increases, FedLoan Servicing will send an account update, which will tell you what—if any—actions you will need to take.

Click [HERE](#) to log into FedLoan's borrower portal to track your payment counts to keep track of where you are with payments.

Click [HERE](#) for updated information about paying back your loans.

Student loan payments are set to restart after May 1. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

UUP SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DEADLINE IS MARCH 1

Time is running out to apply for annual scholarships of \$3,000 offered by UUP.

March 1 is the deadline to apply for two scholarships, the UUP College Scholarship Fund Undergraduate Scholarship and the William Scheuerman Post-Baccalaureate Scholarship.

Applications are on UUP's website, at uupinfo.org/awards.

The College Scholarship Fund awards scholarships to a maximum of four SUNY undergraduates who excel academically and are dedicated to the goals and ideals of the labor movement. Applicants must be full-time students enrolled at SUNY

state-operated schools and have a minimum grade point average of 3.75.

Applicants for the Scheuerman scholarship must have completed at least nine credits at any SUNY graduate or professional school with a cumulative grade-point average of 3.95.

For more information, go [HERE](#) on the UUP website.

REGISTER FOR UUP'S MARCH PRE-RETIREMENT WORKSHOPS

UUP is holding its next virtual pre-retirement workshops March 14 and March 16.

The two-part webinars will cover health care and Medicare, followed by union benefits, such as dental and vision coverage.

The schedule for the workshops is:

- Monday, March 14, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 16, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

To register, go [HERE](#).

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