



The State Employees' Association Of New Hampshire, Inc.

December 23, 2021

Governor Christopher T. Sununu
Office of the Governor
State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Governor Sununu,

Last fall, I wrote to you in expectation of the impending winter surge of COVID-19 with the request to take the necessary steps to protect your employees from unnecessary risk of infection, illness, and death. Yet, here we are a year later, and I am writing again to ask the same.

The COVID-19 infection rates are currently higher than they have ever been, and the new Omicron variant threatens to make matters even worse. The influx of patients is overstressing hospitals, and New Hampshire citizens are dying every day. Despite all of our efforts, we still are not beyond this terrible pandemic. Given how bad conditions have gotten, I am asking again that you make any necessary changes to working conditions to ensure risk to State employees is mitigated as much as possible.

With temperatures having dropped and more activities being forced indoors, infection from COVID-19 becomes more likely. As a result, I am asking that you once again allow agencies to permit the liberal use of remote work or telework where possible. Remote work does not work for all agencies or all positions, but we proved over the last two years that State services can still be provided with a hybrid option of in-person and remotely working staff. Allowing employees to work remotely protects all staff by reducing the risk of exposure to remote work employees, and also thins the number of people at actual worksites, and allows greater social distancing opportunities. Additionally, the State can better ensure that operations will not be stopped or significantly slowed due to mass quarantine or illness scenarios by preventing or mitigating potential outbreaks. Addressing these issues is mutually beneficial to both managerial and union interests.

Additionally, Governor, we need to resist the pandemic fatigue that everyone is facing. All of us are emotionally worn out from this pandemic, but vigilance is still needed. That means we need to reinforce the tactics we know work. We need to make sure sick and exposed employees do not come to worksites and continue the spread. We need to make certain masks and other PPE are made available at all worksites. We need to encourage social distancing and good hygiene. Perhaps most importantly, we need to continue to advocate for employees and the public to get vaccinated and get boosted. We need to offer vaccinations in convenient places, including places of employment and on work time as is permitted by our collective bargaining agreement.



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As was previously requested, the SEA is asking to partner with you for all of these reasons and more. Your employees have valuable knowledge and information on maintaining safety, providing essential employment benefits and protections, and carrying out the essential services the State provides to its citizens. If you hear what we have to say and work with us to address these issues, we will all be better armed to make informed decisions about the challenges our state is facing.

I implore you to take this invitation seriously. Lives, livelihoods, and essential state services are at stake. But, we can still defeat these challenges rather than be defeated by them. I hope to hear from you soon, Mr. Governor.

Sincerely,

Rich Gulla, President SEA/SEIU 1984