

AFSCME 3 NEWSLETTER



Member Spotlight: Shekia Fletcher

Fiscal Account Clerk, Worcester County Health Department

During this challenging time, Shekia has been working from home (pictured left). Throughout the pandemic the Health Department has been overwhelmed with calls for help dealing with Mental Health and Substance Abuse. Shekia has processed and corresponded with clients to set up over 80 intakes in a couple week's time by herself.

Ms. Fletcher has remained consistent and determined to help the public in every way she can during this pandemic without any complaints. Thank you, Shekia!

General Assembly Could Gain New Budgetary Powers

Currently, each year the Governor of Maryland must pass a balanced budget and only the Governor can add money to the budget. This limits the power of the General Assembly to amend the budget. This past legislative session, the General Assembly passed a law for a Constitutional Amendment that, if approved by the Maryland voters at the November 2020 election, would allow the General Assembly to increase appropriations made by the Governor and add items to appropriations for Executive Branch agencies, beginning with the fiscal 2024 budget bill. This is a huge win for AFSCME's ability to impact how state resources are prioritized and allocated. Read more about the bill: (SB1028)

AFSCME 3 Members Virtually Meet with Congressman Steny Hoyer

AFSCME members recently held a virtual meeting with U.S. House of Representatives Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, from Southern Maryland. AFSCME leaders from University of Maryland-College Park, Southern Maryland Pre-Release Unit, Prince Georges County Department of Social Services, St. Mary's College of Maryland, and the Department of Labor joined President Moran in this meeting. Congressman Hoyer laid out the House's proposal to "fund the frontlines" to provide all states with necessary state and local government aid. He also took notes on continuing problems at the public universities, as well as the need for testing and PPE statewide at all public facilities.

Sign up for the Emergency Pay Grievance

Visit our website to find out more information about the Emergency Pay Grievance we are filing against the Department of Budget and Management for violating our AFSCME contract. Find out if you are eligible to participate in the grievance and how to sign up to participate in this grievance.

MAY 12TH, 2020

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AFSCME Council 3 Members from the Maryland Department of Health met with management representatives last Monday, May 11, 2020. Labor Management Committees are joint meetings between management and union representatives to negotiate over workplace conditions specific to the agency or facility. These committees are protected and outlined in our union contract in Article 5: Labor Management Committees.

AFSCME raised the following agenda items with management:

- Covid-19 Testing
- Effective Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Plans to respond to positive tests in the workplace
- Fair HR Policies concerning Hazard Pay, Emergency Pay and use of the Emergency Sick Leave and Extended Family Medical Leave of Absence
- Plan to return to normal operations/resume new admissions
- Standardized screening procedures for Local Health Departments and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

MDH management continued to defer answers for a later date and was unable to provide specific information despite having the agenda in advance.

Management insisted they were in compliance with all CDC guidelines and issuing appropriate PPE despite staff at the Dept. of Corrections having N-95 masks that most MDH facilities are lacking. MDH has mandated all facilities to start taking admissions on a weekly basis starting May 11th. The department has no protocol in place to make this happen in a safe manner. They deferred back to the facilities for plans how to transfer, admit and discharge patients without further spread of this virus.

MDH has notified us that they are working to update new protocols around testing employees and patients and screening procedures. Staff at local health departments and OCME report inconsistent screening and management reported only the questionnaire is in use at office buildings. Despite the numerous issues with Response Pay, Emergency Pay and the extended sick leave management had no clear guidance and is "looking into the issues".

AFSCME Council 3 believes all state employees deserve response pay and if you believe you have been left out, please reach out with a list of your duties that you cannot perform while social distancing so we can work with you to advocate for your job classification. The most important step members can take to fight for fair pay during the pandemic crisis is join our Emergency Pay Grievance. Please visit our website to determine if you're eligible and submit your addendum to join no later than next Tuesday, May 26th.

If you have questions about anything in this update, don't hesitate to reach out to Lisa McKinney, Maryland Department of Health Field Representative, at lmckinney@afscmemd.org. Please stay safe!