

3-19-2020

TSEU

I just talked to Joe to get an update on TSEU. He said the State Supported Living Centers and State Hospital have good policies in place. They're basically on lockdown and letting people go home when necessary.

The main problems are in the HHSC benefits offices. Currently, there is no uniform statewide policy on Coronavirus. The program directors in each region determine the policy. For example, in Dallas state offices are closed to the public and some workers are allowed to work from home. But down in the Valley, it's business as usual. On top of that, since the federal government just passed the coronavirus assistance bill, state employees are expecting a surge in applications for public assistance.

Tomorrow, TSEU is sending out a broadcast asking members to call state legislators and ask them to require HHSC to have a uniform coronavirus policy. I asked Joe to send me a draft of the broadcast so I can form it into a letter and have the house and senate Dem Caucus send it to the governor. I can also see if Mario can get some Rs to send one as well.

Here's is what TSEU is asking for in terms of agency policy:

- Asking all state offices to be closed to the public and to allow clients to apply for benefits online or by mail
- Allow workers to work from home wherever possible
- Altering work expectation
- Hire additional staff to deal with the expected increase in benefit applications
- Payout overtime instead of comp time to slow down the turnover rate

Let me know if y'all have any other ideas.

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