

Occupational & Physical Therapists

Chapter Newsletter

November 2020

I want to thank you for staying engaged with the union including attending our remote chapter meetings during this difficult time. I'm heartened by the way our chapter members continue to support each other despite our professional and personal challenges. This newsletter includes important updates from our recent chapter and consultation meetings.

Sincerely,

Thomas Ayrovainen
Occupational & Physical Therapists Chapter Leader

UFT Welfare Fund information

- UFT Welfare Fund representative Lee Hendelman joined our Nov. 4 chapter meeting to discuss member benefits and resources.
 - Visit the [Advantage Care Physicians website](#) for COVID-19 testing information.
 - Visit the [UFT Welfare Fund website](#) for more information about UFT health benefits. For questions about specific health benefits, please use the following email addresses:
 - For assistance with our dental benefit, DentalHelp@uftwf.org
 - For prescription drug assistance, RxHelp@uftwf.org
 - For COBRA assistance, CobraHelp@uftwf.org
 - For assistance with all other health benefit issues, HealthBenefitHelp@uftwf.org
 - Reminder: Occupational and physical therapists are covered by the UFT Welfare Fund [disability benefit](#). We are not excluded from this coverage.
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Oct. 21 remote chapter meeting

Compensation

- If you were eligible for the lump-sum payment on Oct. 1, 2020, you will receive the second half of the payment in July 2020 matter what changes during that timeframe.
 - Spring break compensation is still being negotiated.
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Paperwork

- The Related Services Adaptation Document (RAD) is the only new document in this year's paperwork. It explains how we'll provide services during the 2020-21 school year. Because this year's teaching models are different from last year's, the RAD document is a guide so every IEP document need not need be updated.
 - Clinical guides and teletherapy consent, workload and caseload forms changed in response to the various models schools now employ including the blended model, but these forms are not new. They are always submitted three times per year.
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Caseload

- If you are asked to do an evaluation and do not have the time because your caseload is full, ask your supervisor to send an evaluator. If your request is denied, please contact me. I can ask the DOE to reconsider.
- The remote work agreement between the UFT and the NYC Department of Education says you should work up to eight sessions per day with no more than six in-person sessions with two additional remote sessions. I realize some of you may have eight sessions per day and some of you may have a different number. This is the best caseload agreement we could get with the DOE.
- You should expect to make changes to your schedule as students move from remote to blended learning, but you are not expected to rewrite an entire schedule. The goal is to move toward what we know as a regular school day.
- You cannot deny a principal access to a related services session on Google Meet but we are not formally observed or evaluated during these sessions. Contact your building chapter leader if your principal wants to write a critique of your session.
- We cannot provide services to students who have moved out of New York State.
- First-attend sessions should be entered within 10 workdays from the day the services were provided and 20 workdays thereafter.
- If you are working remotely, I suggest you follow the attendance procedure all other fully remote staff members follow.

- You should be given space in the building to provide in-person sessions, and you should be permitted to complete all your remote work from a remote location. Please contact your building chapter leader if your needs are unmet.
 - Do not cancel sessions to attend IEP meetings. If you are requested to attend the IEP meeting, ask if it can be scheduled at a time when you are available.
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COVID-19 accommodations

- The DOE has not released an extension date for COVID-19 accommodations. Up until now, you enter your medical documentation into the Self-Service Online Leave Application System (SOLAS), and I would assume you should do the same in December. When the date is released, we'll find out more.
 - The responses to people who applied for accommodations in early October were delayed, but they've started to go out now.
 - You can request an accommodation if you are the primary caregiver for a family member with an underlying condition that puts them at risk for COVID-19.
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Important reminders

- Cybershift issues should be addressed by your supervisor and payroll secretary.
 - You should be provided as much PPE and cleaning supplies as you need. If you need additional PPE and cleaning supplies, go to your administration, building chapter leader and/or custodial engineer.
 - COVID-19 testing in the school is mandatory. You cannot refuse to be tested.
 - If your school has positive COVID-19 cases and you had contact with the student or staff member, you should quarantine like every other staff member. Please contact your building chapter leader if you are not included in the contact tracing.
 - We are contractually obligated to complete SESIS, and it should be on our schedules every day.
 - We cannot pick up students during core subjects.
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Oct. 21 consultation meeting

- Contracting out began on Oct. 26. Supervisors had until Oct. 21 to review the contract-out list. If providers receive pressure from the administration, they should refer the administration to their supervisor.
- Online courses should be approved. Providers should follow the agreement and be reasonably up-to-date on SESIS.
- Please email me at tayrovainen@uft.org for any late reimbursement for courses taken or Travel Reimbursement Approval and Certification. I will reach out to

Suzanne Sanchez, the DOE senior director of therapeutic services. We will continue the discussion with her about allocating the funds by a certain date.

- There is no funding to hire new therapists.



Thomas Ayrovainen

Occupational & Physical Therapists Chapter Leader

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