LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

As labor-management funds, we understand the pressures that both employers and workers face in the financially challenged nursing home industry. Employers feel the pressure to hold costs down while workers struggle to balance their work and home lives – and this is all while working to improve and ensure the quality of care for New York’s nursing home residents. In this edition of 1199SEIU Greater New York Employer News, you’ll see some of the ways we’re helping employers and workers achieve these mutual goals.

In this issue, we focus on the new Greater New York Collective Bargaining Agreement, which stabilizes our Greater New York Benefit Fund through 2011 by providing adequate funding while the Benefit Fund maintains a tight rein on costs to maintain benefits and most programs at current levels. We’ve pulled out some of the highlights for you and prepared a look at what the contract means.

You’ll read about our Greater New York Benefit Fund’s new cost-savings programs, mandated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, that will help hold down the costs of your employees’ healthcare coverage while ensuring that they continue to receive the care they need. These new initiatives will build on our earlier cost-containment successes to keep our health benefits among the most cost-effective in the nation.

You’ll also read about how the Greater New York Education Fund is providing valuable training opportunities to strengthen the quality of care in our nursing homes. And finally, you’ll read about how the Child Care Fund is making it easier for your employees to register for the many valuable child care programs that support working 1199SEIU parents and give them peace of mind while they’re on the job. We also ask you to save the date for the Child Care Corporation’s second annual “Care for Kids” Gala in December, which will raise money to bring these programs to the communities in which we serve.

These are just a few of the ways that our Funds are strengthening the workforce and the industry. Together with our employers and the Union we’re addressing the needs of our nursing home workforce, which helps us meet our shared goal of providing quality patient care.

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Executive Director
Benefit and Pension Funds

Deborah King
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Training and Employment Funds

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Let us know what you think! Send your comments on the new website to communications@119Funds.org.

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New Greater New York Contract Stabilizes the Benefit Fund and Maintains Health Benefits Through 2011

Benefit Fund Must Build On Successful Cost-Containment Efforts

Earlier this year, the Greater New York employers and the Union agreed to re-open the current contract to find both short- and long-term solutions to funding health benefits for Greater New York members. These solutions needed to address the growing deficit in the Greater New York Benefit Fund, where rising healthcare costs continued to outpace employer contributions.

Maintaining this coverage in the face of rising costs and the economic uncertainty in the nursing home industry is a pressing challenge, but the employers and Union agreed to take mutual responsibility to stabilize the Fund and maintain health benefit levels through 2011 by agreeing to shared sacrifices.

Members will forgo pension credits for working in 2008 and 2009 to allow $38 million to be contributed to the Benefit Fund. As a trade-off, members will be eligible for a higher final pension at retirement of $999 per month for 27 years of service as of January 1, 2011. In addition, the legal benefit will be eliminated and legal services will be provided through an outside plan. The Fund will also be responsible for implementing new cost-savings programs, while employers agreed to additional contributions and payments to ensure the Benefit Fund's financial security over the next four years.

In the last contract, the Fund was mandated to introduce cost-savings programs that would generate $44 million through 2008. The new contract directs the Benefit Fund to generate an additional $40 million in savings between 2008 and 2011. In addition, the master employer contribution rate will increase in the new contract to 22.75% on January 1, 2008, 24.50% on January 1, 2009, and 26.5% on April 1, 2010.

The New Greater New York Contract

THE GREATER NEW YORK BENEFIT FUND

• Stabilizes the Benefit Fund by infusing $56 million into the Fund over the life of the contract
• Maintains member health benefits through 2011
• Directs the Fund to introduce new cost-savings programs to save $10 million per year between 2008 and 2011
• Increases employer contributions by 5.5% over the contract, bringing the master contribution rate to 26.5% by 2011

THE PENSION FUND

• Members will not accrue pension credits for 2008 and 2009, allowing $19 million per year ($38 million total) to be contributed instead to the Greater New York Benefit Fund
• After January 1, 2011, the cap and maximum benefits for members increase from 25 years and $925 per month to 27 years and $999 per month

Scholarship and Camp Opportunities Available Now for Children of 1199SEIU Members

It's registration time for 1199SEIU families to apply for academic scholarships and summer camp slots. Last year, the Joseph Tauber Scholarship program provided financial support to hundreds of college students, and more than 50 1199SEIU children aged 9 to 15 attended overnight summer camps through the Anne Shore Camp Program.

1199SEIU members recently received application coupons in their fall Benefit Fund member magazine. If your Human Resources department would like additional coupons, contact the Joseph Tauber Scholarship Program at (646) 473-8999 or the Anne Shore Camp Program at (646) 473-6925. The coupons can also be downloaded at www.1199SEIUFunds.org.

Are Your New Employees Receiving Their Health Benefits?

Even if you are reporting wages and paying contributions for new employees in 1199SEIU bargaining units, they are not eligible for health benefits until they enroll in the Benefit Fund. But you can help the Benefit Fund make sure these new hires are receiving the coverage that your contributions pay for.

If you are submitting wage reports electronically, the Fund already has the information we need to contact these members and help them enroll. If you are not submitting electronically, you can ensure that new hires in 1199SEIU bargaining units are receiving their health benefits by submitting a “new hire” report along with your monthly wage report. The report should list each new employee’s name, social security number, date of hire, date of birth, and home address and phone. Our staff will follow up with each member.

You should also remind your new hires to fill out an Enrollment Form, if they haven’t already. Forms are available online at www.1199SEIUFunds.org and from your outreach coordinator.
Throughout the summer, the Greater New York Benefit Fund – with the support of the employers and the Union – led a comprehensive educational program for members and providers on the new cost-savings programs that will go into effect on October 1.

In order to implement the programs as seamlessly as possible, the Funds are communicating extensively with the members as well as providers, holding worksite presentations led by outreach coordinators and a full-day training attended by nearly 300 Greater New York delegates and Benefit Fund outreach committee members.

The new programs include:

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To hold down prescription costs, one of the Greater New York Benefit Fund’s fastest-growing expenses, the Fund’s clinicians and Medco have expanded the Preferred Drug List (PDL). The new PDL contains 16 new drug categories, and the Fund and Medco have negotiated cost-effective choices in these and other categories where prices for similar medications vary widely. The Fund is also bringing the Preferred Drug program into line with the existing Mandatory Generic program. The cap on non-preferred brands, which is currently $16, will now be eliminated to encourage better compliance in using the PDL. After October 1, members must pay the full difference in cost between preferred and non-preferred medications.

A preview of the new PDL is already available online at [www.1199SEIUFunds.org](http://www.1199SEIUFunds.org), and members have been encouraged to check the list and talk to their doctors about using preferred medications before the October 1 effective date.

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The full list of new procedures requiring prior authorization, as well as a list of participating imaging facilities, is available online at [www.1199SEIUFunds.org](http://www.1199SEIUFunds.org).

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To help keep chronic diseases under control and reduce the significant acute medical costs that can occur when they are left unmanaged, members with conditions such as diabetes, asthma or high blood pressure will have access to voluntary, personalized health coaching by phone. Help us build on last year’s achievement to make this event even more successful!

When children grow up in thriving communities, we all benefit. That’s why the Child Care Fund, through the non-profit Child Care Corporation, began the Care for Kids gala last December with the generous support of many employers and participating institutions. Help us build on last year’s achievement to make this event even more successful!

To reserve your seats, take out a program ad or for more information, please call the Child Care Fund at (212) 564-2220.

Please join us for the second annual Care for Kids gala on December 10, 2007. Proceeds from the event will provide critical family support for low-income 1199SEIU parents who are ineligible for Child Care Fund benefits (including many low-wage home care workers). Besides supporting working families, these programs also benefit the communities in which these members live and raise their children.

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Greater New York Education Fund Programs Build Skills That Strengthen Nursing Home Care

With the current focus on person-centered care in the nursing home industry, many homes are struggling to give staff the training they need to meet quality care guidelines with limited resources. As a solution, the Greater New York Education Fund delivers a variety of training programs that meet the ever-growing needs of residents and their families. These programs address each level of the industry by improving workers’ skills, building collaborative relationships between staff and management and increasing worker satisfaction.

Thousands of nursing home workers – nearly 5,000 in 2006 alone – have benefited from the Fund's programs, which range from tuition reimbursement and adult education to more specific training in Customer Service, Gerontology, Leadership and Emergency Preparedness. Programs are also designed to meet the specific challenges facing 1199SEIU nursing homes, including providing backfill funding when participants are in training, targeting training to the many different educational levels of 1199SEIU members and offering in-depth courses in areas that are often not covered in general certification training.

At the Cobble Hill Health Center in Brooklyn, the administration has seen a dramatic change in the quality of resident life and care since participating in Education Fund programs. “Our staff now has an advanced understanding of the many different educational levels of 1199SEIU members and offering in-depth courses in areas that are often not covered in general certification training,” said Administrator Tony Yang-Lewis.

Working together, the staff and management at the Health Center implemented many new programs with successful results. They established a full palliative care program for the facility to ensure residents’ comfort, created a seven-step Narcotic checklist so that staff can help residents remain as pain-free as possible, opened a “meditation room” and developed feeding tube guidelines for staff to follow.

“These programs have truly helped transform our organizational culture, which has tremendously improved the quality of care provided to our residents and their family members, and the quality of work life of our staff,” Yang-Lewis concluded.

The same is true for other participating homes. In fact, a study last year by the United Hospital Fund found that nursing home workers who had participated in Education Fund programs communicated more effectively with residents and their family members as well as coworkers, worked with their supervisors more effectively and demonstrated increased confidence in their work. And these skills translate to stronger facilities and improved quality of care.

With shifts that often fall outside traditional nine-to-five hours, many nursing home workers find it a challenge to access reliable, affordable child care providers. That’s why the 1199SEIU Child Care Fund created flexible options – such as Learning Centers and day camps that open early and close late – so working 1199SEIU parents have the support they need in their home life to succeed in the workplace.

The same is true for helping working 1199SEIU parents register for the Fund’s programs. Through October 31, members can register for next year’s child care programs at their convenience. In order to accommodate as many members as possible, throughout September and October the Fund is offering multiple registration sites around New York City at Fund offices and worksites, extended hours of operation and online registration and support options. These expanded services, built around healthcare workers’ schedules, make it easy for 1199SEIU members to access the services and programs your contributions pay for.

At on-site registration, parents can learn about services offered by the Fund’s Child Care Resource & Referral Services (CCR&R) and get more information on other programs, such as upcoming parenting seminars. And members who aren’t able to register in person can simply visit the Fund’s new website, www.1199SEIU Funds.org, to register online and even access a step-by-step tutorial of the online application process.

Worry-free child care is just one of the many benefits that your employees can access. Members can also apply for educational, recreational and special needs programs, summer day and sleep-away camps, and cultural arts programs. This broad range of services supports families with children from infancy to college, giving children the support they need to succeed in school while allowing their parents to balance their work and family responsibilities.

To register, members simply need to bring a completed application and the required documents (a list can be found online at www.1199SEIU Funds.org) to a registration site. All eligible members received registration packets, including the application, during August. If your Human Resources department would like extra copies of the application, registration materials or a list of your eligible employees, contact the Child Care Funds at (212) 564-2220.
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“Our staff now has an advanced understanding of the complex needs of our chronically ill residents, and the training programs have enabled us to develop facility-wide quality improvement projects based on specific performance goals that are defined by each training cohort,” said Administrator Tony Yang-Lewis.

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Child Care Registration Is Open Through October 31

WORRY-FREE CHILD CARE FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

Registration Sites Where Members Live and Work

- Amityville
- Bronx
- Brooklyn
- Staten Island
- Uniondale
- White Plains
- Albany (various sites)

For details about locations and online registration, visit www.1199SEIU Funds.org.

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1199SEIU Family of Funds
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