

**SEIU District 1199 and the Ohio Department of Health  
Agency Professional Committee  
March 4, 2025**

**Present for Management**

Benjamin Hunt, Labor Relations Administrator 1 (co-chair)  
Belinda Kerr, Director HR  
Bill Beavin, Labor Relations

**Present for the Union**

Geoff Davies, 1199 Coordinator (co-chair)  
Heather Searfoss-Allaire, Public Health Consultant, Bureau of HIV, STI & Viral Hepatitis  
Julie Keegan, Public Health Consultant, Bureau of Infectious Disease (Toledo Office)  
Chris Binder, Reviewer, Bureau of Regulatory Operations  
David Martin, Infectious Disease Control Consultant, Bureau of Infectious Diseases  
Angela Thomas, Health Care Facilities Surveyor -Independent, Bureau of Survey and Certification  
Molly Davis, Health Care Facilities Surveyor -Independent, Bureau of Survey and Certification  
David Marlowe, Health Care Facilities Surveyor -Independent, Bureau of Survey and Certification

**Housekeeping**

- Next APC dates:

Tuesday, April 22, 2025  
Tuesday, July 22, 2025  
Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Pencil these in, will firm up as we get closer.

**Agenda**

Late additions to agenda:

**LGBTQ and DEI – any impending affects from federal changes?**

BH responded to my knowledge no changes as to what is going on the federal level. This may change if it affects federal monies but not right now

**Project employees and who are being told cannot join union.**

We don't agree that they're being told this. If you have info, we'd be happy to correct. Obviously, they can. And for clarification and haven't been hired in ages. We've always told folks everyone.

Belinda: they do attend and will do. Perfect.

Are contract employees are exempt from the telework rule?

It depends on their contract.

**Guidance on how to request Sick Time supplement per contract language 13.04, page 39** "Sick leave may be supplemented at the employee's request to 100% of pay with available sick leave balances."

Kerr: there is annotation area. Our process has been out there in Kronos. We can issue guidance with our management team on how to do it. As long as the person requests it, we'll do it.

DM: How to use old sick leave carried over from OSU?

Its automatic once you exhaust your current. Any qualifying sick leave. Contact payroll with any questions about old sick leave.

## **Main Agenda**

### **1. Telework Agreement Terminations – Returning to Office**

#### **a. How and when will offices and cubicles be assigned?**

*We'll assign as need of program require. Different program leader will assign for the best of ODH. People will make decisions made for their program, could be near each other or organized as bets we can. It would be up to the bureau chief how they organize their people. We don't want to micromanage that.*

#### **b. Monitors – most members have two, how will individual set ups work? And set up – will they have keyboard, mouse, phone etc.? That's still ongoing even now let alone when full.**

*Kerr: we should have plenty because they'll bring them. If they need extra let their bosses know and will figure out. Assuming their will be surplus equipment since at office and home. Each employee returning will be given instructions on what they need to return to the office.*

#### **c. Is the office furniture/decoration policy changing?**

*We are looking at loosening up the workplace policy. We'll let you know.*

#### **d. What offices are now considered HQ/reporting locations?**

*Columbus, Drew Center Dayton (only a couple), Columbus, Akron Akron? It is a small space. Limited space, nowhere near as large as before. There is still space to use as needed to scan copy and work from.*

- BK reported GD has received notice of who is having their teleworking notice revoked but he does not know where they are going.

*We don't have a document that covers the whole staff. As we develop it could be public. You have the list of emails when we sent them out.*

#### **c. What is the ODH capacity at each office?**

*Don't know. Especially downtown it's fluid. We're trying to build it out and work on the first.*

- As you're creating more space would you be calling more people back?

*Potentially, right now priority is now, we don't know about the future.*

#### **e. Any news on Chestnut? It's leased out?**

*BK: we do not have space in that building right now. We don't have any plans right now. It's a moving target; we're trying to keep ourselves within our 246 space. DHS owns the building, and we have previously leased it, but not anymore. We're not trying to expand back into that building, we're trying to deal with our six floors in 246*

- f. ADA accommodations and FMLA restrictions – how and will these be honored?

*The FMLA is probably not affected. ADA requires a conservations process. If something comes up we invite employees to have those conversations. The law requires us. We're not going to have a list from before. We couldn't assume or have knowledge of it so just raise it.*

- g. Cost offsets – parking mainly, but generally. Has there been any discussion of providing relief to what amounts to thousands of dollars per year for members to work downtown?

*No, not at this time. There is a pre-tax commuter benefit that employees can utilize. It's open at any time for enrollments.*

- h. Would you allow a different office?

*Yes. If someone is closer to a district office with capacity they should request. Assume it would be ODH because we don't control any other space. Local health departments would not be possible because we would have to contract them for the space. Also defeats the team aspect of returning to the office.*

- i. What is the cost/savings estimate for ODH on the cost of moving all these employees back into the office full-time?

*We haven't had any figures on that. We're trying not to lease new floors. Couldn't tell you what the cost has been on man hours, equipment etc. So much balancing, couldn't say.*

## **2. Telework Agreement Modifications and Continuations**

- a. How and when will those who have been modified know what their modification is?

*BH reported that they are in process of the notifications. They were started on Monday 03/03/25 and should be finished by the end of the week.*

- b. What examples of modified?

*Modified vs. continued: BH reported that modifications generally mean that they are going to be less in the office then you already were, but not all. It could be that it is Monday and Tuesday now changing to a Wednesday Thursday.*

- c. Notice period? Two weeks? Some have been given less.

- d. How has it been determined how and why members are being modified rather than continued?

*BH reported that determination is made by policy. They are applying the principles of field work and 40 miles. He reported that surveyors are to remain remote. Notice is as soon as possible by 17<sup>th</sup>.*

- Any consideration of nature of the work?

*Yes, it would fall under type of work, so surveyors would be remote. But some jobs functions attached to the job would be a consideration.*

- e. There are rumors that ODH is looking at extra capacity, could these members' statuses change if extra space becomes available? Are currently continuing members' statuses temporary? (e.g. chestnut rd. lease runs out)

*Looking at now, staying in 246. Can't say for sure what the future would be.*

- f. For those who are not required to return due to space, how has management determined who those people would be?

*It's our policy. Policy has primary consideration generally field work and space, and secondary is forty miles. Trying to apply those.*

*Any consideration of the nature of the work? Yes, it would fall under the type of work, so surveyors would be remote. But some jobs functions attached to the job would be a consideration.*

- g. What factors work into the 40-mile rule. Policy says "may". Some have reported that even though they live more than 100 miles away they still have to come in 1x a week. Is it a strict 40?

*Ben: having remote four days a week is consistent with policy. Remote schedule does have a requirement to see you in the office occasionally. We modified that person.*

*40-mile mark not strict. Could still come in certain amount, could be one or two days "remote". Not a hard and fast rule.*

- Can't describe quite how much members are offended/disgusted/feeling betrayed by this. It's the worst move and is negative for morale and recruitment and retention.

*It's understood, we are open to suggestions. Do not begrudge how members feel about this.*

- DM: To try to keep people is there a way to compromise to follow the order but not bring them in all the time? Like lessening the blow? Especially with parking.

*BK: open for compromise but have to follow order*

- What percentage of management are in office five days a week with this order, after 17<sup>th</sup>. Yes, 17<sup>th</sup>. All management staff. We are trying to be sensitive to making exceptions for bosses to be working from home. Not what we're doing. BK reported that management is coming back 5 days a week, and the forty mile rule does not apply to them. BH reported they are not making the members come in while the bosses are home working. BB reported that they cannot speak in absolute because nothing is absolute at this time. BH reported that this executive order and policy is not targeted at the union members.

- Where did 40 come from, why 40?

*Honestly, it came from the state. Not sure where it came from. It's in the DAS policy. As an agency we didn't independently come up with that. Would be speculating.*

### **3. General Questions**

- a. Does the telework status of a position remain on separation? If a current member on a team who is fully remote quits and another member of the same team who is office FT applied for their position, would they assume also the status?

*For the forty mile rule that will not follow the job assignment. Its for that person who live 40 miles for as long as they have the job. The job will revert to office five day a week.*

*BH: the answer depends, 40 mile rule that will not follow job titles, the person can keep their job until they leave, once they leave ODH will repost that job as a 5 day a week in office*

- 40 mile away jobs will be essentially weaned out?

*BK: yes eventually the 40-mile jobs will be ended and not reposted*

- Is there any difference in status for the 2 day vs 5 day a week same positions

*BK: The same job has the same schedule. The posting will be clear what the expectations will be*  
**Changing jobs may jeopardize your status.**

- What is the Job Knowledge Retention Form? Currently issued to Bureau of Maternal, Child and Family Health with a March 10<sup>th</sup> deadline. What is it for? What is its purpose? What policy covers its use?

*Ben: Just knowledge retention. Its an old form. Understood how it could cause some concern. They were looking at concerns of people who might be leaving. They had it more than a month ago. They were concerned about succession planning because they have a number of positions eligible for retirement. Timing was terrible, but it was not intentional. It was just them, no other Bureaus.*

- Federal funding - implications on our programs
  - Is ODH affected by any of the federal freezes? If so how, and what is plan?
  - Some programs are funded by CDC grants. ODH reportedly hasn't received the money yet and so are using emergency funds. What happens if that funding is not restored or cut? Layoff?

*Don't have a good answer on that. We're HR not fiscal, can't say. We're not aware of anything happening right now. If there are funds not received, then I don't know about that.*

*We've not heard we've lost any funding at this time, if you have reason to believe unless you have specific information.*

- What happens in the event of a protracted federal government shut down?

*BK reported that ODH is federally funded by almost 75%. He reported that they can not control what is going on and they can not make any decisions on it but they are going to follow the union contract if worst case scenarios happen.*

- Newly hired Surveyors  
 Currently all new hires, (in their probationary year) are training from home. This includes the trainers who are independent surveyors themselves conducting the training from their homes. Are there any plans to change this or will field staff be unaffected.

*Agela: Field staff surveyors, when I started we trained in the office for that first year. The new staff have all been home reviewing training very week or two so on. Are we keeping that the same? We have trainers who might not be field staff, will that change?*

*Kerr: they are field staff though yes? They're getting their training in Columbus for a week. We're not looking at pulling people all over to do training, wouldn't imagine. For trainers within 40 miles of offices, I don't know specifically. It would depend on that criteria in the policy. We don't know exactly, will follow up with you to let you know.*

*Ben: they would be in the cancellation notices.*

- Some reviewer positions posted as hybrid, some not. What is the status of that position? What will it mean.
  - E.g. surveyors, reviewer, Office Reviewer

*Angela: Positions posted Oct-Dec for a specific position. Now one says hybrid one doesn't, Is that the February 4<sup>th</sup> thing.*

*No not necessarily, but the posting may be different. So if you were hired November December the rules under the policy govern not the job posting. We will be following new executive order 5 day office now, prior posting will not be considered. You would be in jeopardy of losing the 40-mile benefit if you transferred into a previous remote position.*

- Any concern about the governor deciding to follow DC and terminate probationary employees?

*BK: no known information on any changes to new staff. Federal orders do not apply to state ohio employees regarding probationary*

*The Federal has no authority to terminate state employees, no plans at this time to terminate probationary employees*

- Could DeWine follow the Trump order, just decide to?

*I don't think so, personally. Do not expect the Governor to do that.*

- New trainees would like guidance on travel for lunch in their personal vehicle. They're being told the need to deduct their lunch mileage before submitted. I cannot say where it says lunch miles in personal vehicle are reimbursed. Also, people being told as soon as you walk out of facility clock out you don't get travel time for your lunch. Have you been to Edgerton.

**NEED THIS RESPONSE**