

CORRECTION OFFICERS' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

"PATROLLING THE TOUGHEST PRECINCTS IN NEW YORK"

The Fight Continues



JUNE 2020



A Message from the President

COVID-19 | CONTRACT | LEGISLATION | UNION BENEFITS

Dear Brother and Sister Officers,

As I write to you, our fellow officers continue to work at the epicenter of the epicenter of this unprecedented public health crisis that has challenged and tested us like never before. There was no "playbook" provided to any of us on how to deal with this. Tragically, we have lost eight of our brothers and sisters to this deadly disease. At the appropriate time, we will honor their lives with a memorial service that pays tribute to them. History will look back on this chapter of the New York City Department of Correction and this generation of Correction Officers, who put themselves in harm's way, and all of you will be remembered as the bravest to ever serve our Department.

The Executive Board and I continue to do everything possible to keep you and your fellow officers safe during this COVID-19 pandemic. We mailed out KN-95 masks, hand sanitizers, gloves, distributed KN-95 masks and hand sanitizers to every facility, we shut down inmate visits, we segregated new admissions, we exposed the Department for making officers work triple tours, we sued the city twice to get more PPE and to sanitize our facilities and we successfully achieved free testing for every New York City Correction Officer through Northwell Health's 52 Urgent Care locations. We remain in court over our demand to force the Department to make sure every Correction Officer who has tested positive for COVID-19, tests negative before returning to duty.

COVID-19 | CONTRACT | LEGISLATION

While we have made some progress in this fight, there are still many more challenges ahead. One of the biggest challenges impacting all of us right now is the financial crisis this public health crisis has created.

Recognizing the urgency to help our members get through these challenging times, we quickly re-entered negotiations with the Office of Labor Relations. We modified the previous tentative contract to prioritize the different needs Correction Officers have now with the two most important needs being met in this new contract—raises and benefits. The key difference between this contract and the previous one is the elimination of the education fund, annuity increases, and additional release time. **By eliminating these provisions, we were able to add \$3,450,000.00 to the active welfare fund, which will now bring the total contribution to the active health and welfare fund to \$8,450,000. Additionally, we were able to eliminate three months of wage increase deferrals that had existed in the previous deal. There will now be only three months of wage deferrals out of**

36 months, as opposed to six months of wage deferrals.

What does this all mean? Simply put, this means more money in your wallet. In July you will receive a 4.75% raise in your salary with another 3% raise in June of 2021, and a retro check in October going back to when the contract ended in March of 2019. This also means with more contributions from the city added to the Active Member Health and Welfare Fund, we will be able to make significant improvements to your optical, dental, and prescription drug benefits at a time when insurance costs continue to rise.

The road ahead for all essential workers, including Correction Officers, is filled with uncertainty and significant challenges. The State of New York is facing a \$15 Billion budget deficit. The City of New York is facing a \$8 Billion budget deficit. Every day we hear fear mongering about cutting essential services and essential workers. Despite this chaos and uncertainty surrounding us, we have an agenda that's focused on the road ahead for our members. This agenda includes ensuring that our

officers are fully equipped to prepare for what everyone expects to be a second wave of COVID-19 in the Fall. This includes our advocacy to get Hazard Pay for our members financed by the Federal Government. **This agenda includes vigorously lobbying to obtain legislation benefiting Enhanced Tier 3 Officers, comprised of officers hired between April 1, 2012 and December 31, 2016, which would provide parity with our officers in other Retirement Tiers. And this agenda includes the fight for safer jails, which we have been fighting daily for the past four years. We must ensure every Correction Officer has the tools and equipment to work safely under policies that make everyone in our facilities safe.**

With your continued support, we will move this agenda forward. We will keep New York City Correction Officers moving forward.

Sincerely,



Elias Husamudeen
President

GONE BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN!

WE PRAY FOR THE FAMILIES OF OUR BROTHERS & SISTERS WHO WERE TAKEN FROM US BY COVID-19

**CO ELVESTER MCKOY
CO MAURICE LACEY JR.
CO MICHELLE SUMPTER
CO ELY GALAN
CO QUINSEY SIMPSON
CO CONNIE JONES HAWKINS
CO RICHARD CLOSS
CO TREVOR BUTLER**

**AMKC
QDC
RNDC
BKCTS
SOD
RNDC
RNDC
GRVC**



2020 COBA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

CORRECTION OFFICERS HIRED AFTER APRIL 1, 2012

In 2016, COBA won a hard-fought battle to provide disability benefits to protect our members when they need assistance the most. On November 29, 2016 Mayor de Blasio signed legislation ensuring that the families of Correction Officers will not face financial hardships in the unfortunate event that their spouse incurs a career-ending injury. This agreement also ensures that financial support will now be available for our officers in the Enhanced Tier Three pension system just as it exists for our officers in other pension Tiers. **As a Enhanced Tier Three Member, you will now be eligible for an accidental disability benefit equal to 75% of your final average salary if you become physically or mentally incapacitated for the performance of duties.**

NOTE: These benefits will not be reduced by any Social Security benefits you may receive for the same disability.

Our upcoming legislative agenda builds upon our successful efforts enhancing benefits for Officers hired after April 1, 2012. Outlined below are key pieces of this new legislative agenda for Enhanced Tier Three Correction Officers.

REMOVE SOCIAL SECURITY OFFSET CF22 “QUALITY OF LIFE LEGISLATION”

This bill, introduced in 2019 relates to removing the Social Security offset for New York City uniformed Correction Officers who are members of the New York City uniformed Correction revised plan (CF22). The Social Security offset causes the regular pension to be reduced by up to 50% of the primary Social Security benefit at the age of 62.

ALLOCATION TO BORROW FROM THE PENSION FUND. CF22 “QUALITY OF LIFE LEGISLATION”

This legislation permits Tier 3 NYC Correction Officers (CO20) to borrow from the Additional Member Contributions (currently allowed to borrow from their Basic Member contributions) and allows Enhanced Tier 3 (CF22) members to borrow from their contributions.

OVERTIME IS PENSIONABLE FOR ALL CORRECTION OFFICERS (INCLUDING ENHANCED TIER 3 (CF22) MEMBERS)

FOR ALL CORRECTION OFFICERS

REMOVES POST-RETIREMENT EARNING RESTRICTION FOR CF20/CF22. UNDER 507-A.E. “QUALITY OF LIFE LEGISLATION”

This legislation, removes post-retirement earnings restrictions for New York City Department of Correction uniformed personnel. It provides that any person who retires with an ordinary disability retirement will not be subject to any earning limitations for private sector employment when the employment occurs after the earliest date that the person could have retired with a service retirement. The current cap in 2018 was \$31,100 and rises with inflation annually.

CONSECUTIVE SENTENCES FOR AGGRAVATED HARASSMENT OF AN EMPLOYEE BY AN INMATE. “MEMBERS SAFETY LEGISLATION”

This legislation would require that any inmate convicted of splashing a Correction Officer with bodily fluids (Aggravated Harassment, an E Felony) would receive a sentence which runs consecutively with any term of imprisonment to which the defendant is subject. Separate legislation would add spit to the definition of bodily fluids. Inmate assaults in the form of splashings were elevated in 1996. Since that time, COBA has lobbied to include spit within the substances covered by the law. Most recently, COBA successfully lobbied to include Corrections Officers within the legislation criminalizing throwing water at police and peace officers. We continue to fight for passage of the legislation.

INCREASE PENALTY FOR PROMOTION OF PRISON CONTRABAND IN THE FIRST DEGREE TO A CLASS C FELONY FROM A CLASS D FELONY. “MEMBERS SAFETY LEGISLATION”

This bill would enhance the penalties for introducing or possessing dangerous contraband in New York State's prisons. It would amend the definition of "dangerous contraband" to include, but not be limited to, firearms and other dangerous weapons, destructive devices and controlled substances and would raise the penalty for those who commit this crime to a class C felony which provides for a sentence not to exceed fifteen years.

COBA FIGHTS FOR HAZARD PAY

The COBA is calling on Congress to pass “The Heroes Fund,” which will provide essential workers like our Correction Officers, with Hazard Pay. We have been the hardest hit municipal jail force in the country. Our heroes need to be financially compensated for the sacrifices we are making and the risks we are taking every day to keep this city safe.



**DELIVERING
MORE
AFFORDABLE &
COMPREHENSIVE
BENEFITS
FOR ALL ACTIVE
AND RETIRED
COBA MEMBERS**

**ENHANCED
PRESCRIPTION
DRUG BENEFITS**

In 2017, COBA made substantial upgrades to your prescription drug benefits, making them more affordable for you and your family. These upgrades include the following:

FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS:

- Active members have NO annual CAP for covered medication in compliance to the Affordable Care Act. Previously, active members had an annual CAP of \$10,000.

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS:

- Members now have an increased annual CAP of \$7,500.00 for covered medication, with no increase on copayments.

(Previously, the annual CAP was \$5,000.)



ENHANCED DENTAL BENEFITS

FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS:

In 2017, COBA made substantial upgrades to your dental benefits, making them more affordable for you and your family. These upgrades include the following:

- All patient copayments on Preventive, Diagnostic and basic services for the Liberty Panel PPO plan have been removed.
- All patient copayments for major services for the Liberty Panel PPO plan have been reduced by 50% of the previous copayments.
- All patient copayments for Orthodontics for the Liberty Panel PPO Plan have been reduced by 50% of the previous copayments.
- The Liberty Panel PPO Plan is \$3000.00 annual maximum per person or \$6000.00 per family.
- All covered out of network reimbursements have been increased by 20% of the previous reimbursement amount.

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS:

In 2017, COBA made substantial upgrades to your dental benefits, making them more affordable for you and your family. These upgrades include the following:

- All patient copayments on Preventive, Diagnostic and basic services for the Liberty Panel PPO plan have been removed.
- All patient copayments for major services for the Liberty Panel PPO plan have been reduced by 50% of the previous copayments.
- All patient copayments for Orthodontics for the Liberty Panel PPO Plan have been reduced by 50% of the previous copayments.
- The Liberty Panel PPO Plan is \$3000.00 annual maximum per person or \$6000.00 per family.
- All covered out of network reimbursements have been increased by 20% of the previous reimbursement amount.
- Members outside of NY NJ and FL are now eligible for the new Careington Panel (contact Healthplex and COBA Benefit's Department for more details).



ENHANCED VISION BENEFITS

FOR BOTH ACTIVE & RETIRED MEMBERS:

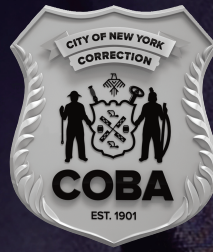
In 2017, COBA made substantial upgrades to your vision benefits, making them more affordable for you and your family, increasing eligibility and accessibility. These upgrades include the following:

- Patients using non-General Vision providers outside of the NY/LI Metro area will be reimbursed by General Vision Services at the increased amount below:

- **Vision Exam: up to \$40**
- **Lenses: up to \$55**
- **Frames: up to \$55**

(Previously, optical reimbursement was \$35 up to \$40 in total.)

- Members and eligible dependents (eligible dependents include, children up to age 19 or 23 with a Student Verification Letter, or a Spouse or Domestic Partner with proper documents submitted to the COBA office.) are now eligible once every 12 months.
- An exclusive GVS Hotline is now available, COBA members may call 1-646-453-2956.
- Members now have personalized I.D. cards.
- Members using in network providers will have an allowance of up to \$345.00 (previously \$255) for single vision Exam, lenses and frames.
- Members using in network providers will have an allowance of up to \$390.00 (previously \$300) for exam bifocal, trifocal, standard progressive lenses and frames.
- If members or dependents select frames or lenses above the allowance they will be charged the difference. Also, services not covered by the plan will be charged to the member or dependent.
- Access to the GVS Mobile Eye care Center. (This is available upon COBA's request at special events and times).



COBA WINS BIG FOR CORRECTION OFFICERS WITH BODY-WORN CAMERAS

In regards to body cameras, this provision memorializes the additional monetary gains we were able to achieve in recognition of the additional responsibilities of wearing body cameras. We also secured in previous discussions, the very important change in procedure that allows Correction Officers who wear body cameras to review the video from the camera before writing a Use of Force report.

This protects Correction Officers from facing charges for getting details wrong in situations where they had no intent to mislead.

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“PATROLLING THE TOUGHEST PRECINCTS IN NEW YORK”

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THANKS TO THE NEW CONTRACT

COBA WILL BE MAKING SUBSTANTIAL UPGRADES TO YOUR UNION BENEFITS IN 2020!

