

From: [McGrail, James](#)
To: [USNH](#)
Subject: HR Update
Date: Monday, April 20, 2020 3:22:59 PM

Dear Colleagues –

Our top priority remains the health and well-being of every member of our community. The Presidents, Chancellor and Board of Trustees are committed to providing support for employees while navigating through the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

In previous communications, we shared information regarding the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) outlined in our [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Benefits & Employment FAQ](#). We encourage you to read the document to see if any of the benefits available will provide needed support. Important updates that have been made to this document since the initial release include:

1. More details around CARES Act retirement hardship withdrawals and loans
2. Fixed the numbering on the FFCRA leave types, to reflect the actual legislation
3. Added a link to the FFCRA Leave request form

In addition, on April 9, 2020, the Administrative Board, consisting of the Presidents and Chancellor, approved three temporary COVID-19 policy changes to support employees not covered by a collective bargaining agreement if these options are needed in the future. These include a temporary reduction in minimum age based on our existing early retirement policy, an enhanced layoff policy that provides continued health plan coverage at the employee cost share, and a new emergency furlough policy:

- **COVID-19 Enhanced Early Retirement Age:** This option was developed for employees nearing the end of their careers at USNH who would like to retire while maintaining the security of health benefits at the employee cost share until age 65. Election is subject to management and leadership approval. The age provision of the existing Pre-65 retirement policy has been temporarily reduced to 59 ½ years of age. The requirement of ten years of status (benefits eligible) service remains, and for this enhanced policy the age and service requirements must be met by 3/1/2021. To apply for this option, employees must provide an official written notice of intent to retire to their supervisor no later than 12/31/20 with an effective retirement date no later than 3/1/21. All other aspects of the current Pre-65 retirement policy apply ([see USY V.A.7.4](#)).
- **COVID-19 Enhanced Lay-off Policy** – The enhanced policy is used when the expectation is to bring the employee back to their job within one year. Under our current lay-off policy, benefits end at the end of the lay-off notice period. With this enhanced policy, employees who receive a written notice of Lay-off prior to 12/31/20 may continue their medical, dental and/or vision coverage under COBRA after the notice period and USNH will, for a period of three months, pay the employer contribution currently in effect for active employees. All other aspects of the current Lay-off policy, including notice pay, apply ([see USY V.C.10](#)).

- **COVID-19 New Emergency Furlough Policy:** This new policy, available until 12/31/20, allows campuses to place eligible employees on a furlough (no work or pay) for up to 120 days (subject to earlier recall based upon business needs). While on furlough, employees can continue all their current benefits at active employee rates and are invoiced for their cost share of premiums on a monthly basis. Accrued leave banks are frozen until return to work. Employees on furlough are eligible to apply for unemployment benefits, with the security of continued USNH benefits.

We are working hard to balance USNH's fiscal health while caring for our employees and encourage you to reach out to your supervisor and Human Resources with any additional questions or concerns not addressed in the provided links/websites.

Thank you for all your flexibility and patience during these challenging times.

Best,
Jim

James A. McGrail
Chief Human Resources Officer

V: 603.862.0921 | F: 603.862.0946

University System of New Hampshire
5 Chenell Drive, Suite 301
Concord, NH 03301
www.usnh.edu

Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail and any files transmitted with it are confidential and are intended solely for the use of the individual(s) addressed in the message above. This communication may contain sensitive or confidential information. If you are not an intended recipient, you have received this e-mail in error and any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing, or copying of this e-mail is strictly prohibited. If you believe you have received this e-mail in error, please notify us immediately and delete all copies of this message including any contained in your reply. Thank you.