

# THE OUTLOOK

Newsletter of the Retiree Council 12

A NYSUT-NEA-AFT Affiliate

November 2022

## Do Vaccinations and Boosters Matter?

By Theresa Kovian, retired from Gloversville School District

Yes, boosters matter but so does convincing unvaccinated Americans to get their first COVID shot. According to *The New York Times* update on October 14<sup>th</sup>, "Test positivity has increased in recent days and remains relatively high, after falling consistently since July. If that trend continues, it could be an early sign of a growing outbreak in the U.S., similar to the ones seen this month in Canada and western Europe."

Charted data from King County, Washington, indicates that while the number of vaccinated individuals has not reduced, the number of deaths has increased. Their website publishes some of the most informative, updated statistics in the country:

<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data.aspx>

Getting your first shot or booster could save your life or reduce your chance of getting so ill you can't work or perform daily activities. Epidemiologist Jennifer Nuzzo, at Brown University, believes that "the biggest benefit is a reduction in severe illness among vulnerable people. Anyone over 50 who has not had their first or booster shot in 2022 might want to consider being vaccinated. If you had COVID, it is recommended to wait several months before getting a booster."

"The updated vaccines use the same technology as the existing ones, meaning they work the same way," says Dr. John Cooke, medical director of the RNA Therapeutics Program at Houston Methodist. "They simply now contain two mRNA molecules instead of just one."

"The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine boosters are authorized as a single dose in people who have completed their primary vaccination series, as well as those who have also received one or more booster shots already," explains Dr. H. Dirk Sostman, chief academic officer of Houston Methodist.

On the downside is the fear of needles and avoiding what some people consider unnecessary medicine. Many individuals recall feeling sick after the initial vaccination and do not wish to experience those symptoms again. In addition, some employers do not offer sick leave or paid sick days so an employee who is a single parent with children may not be able to afford to take time off work.

When following statistical data, many deaths could have been prevented if more Americans received vaccine shots, including booster shots for older people and for those who have a health condition that makes them vulnerable.

### Three New Trips on the Website

<http://rc12.ny.aft.org>

*A Beautiful Noise – Neil Diamond Musical*

RC 12 Trip March 29, 2023

*Rambling on the Rails in New Hampshire*

RC 12 Trip June 5-9, 2023

*The Ark Encounter & Creation Museum  
in Cincinnati + more*

RC 12 Trip October 2-7, 2023



RC 12 member, **Mary Pritchard**, with **Michael Burgess**, former Executive Director of StateWide and former NYS Commissioner of the Office of Aging at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary StateWide Convention

## RC 12 Award of Excellence Recipient, GERALYN O'REILLY

by Stacey Caruso-Sharpe, president of RC 12

Geralyn O'Reilly served NYSUT's more than 200,000 retirees and the NYSUT Retiree Program to the best of her ability and in good faith with the tools, resources, and level of support available for more than 20 years. Geralyn was hired out of the classroom where she served as a social studies teacher and president of the Cambridge Faculty Association. Geralyn served as the sole professional level staff member in Retiree Services for many years and created, administered, coordinated, facilitated, and delivered a wide range of retiree programs and services over the years.

She had the opportunity to serve NYSUT in capacities other than Retiree Services, but she chose to serve NYSUT's retiree constituency for a number of reasons. Geralyn considered it an honor and a privilege to serve NYSUT retirees in gratitude for their service to their students, their community, and NYSUT. She considered it an honor and privilege to serve those who sacrificed so much to create the union that we now know as NYSUT. Geralyn also viewed her role as an opportunity to pay forward her gratitude for the many senior staffers (now retired) who served as guides and mentors throughout Geralyn's teaching career.

In gratitude, Geralyn thanks RC 12 for making a donation to Sidewalk Warriors, a pop-up food pantry run by volunteers that serves the homeless and income insecure of Troy outdoors every Thursday night-rain or shine (including Thanksgiving).

## NYSUT Retiree Council 12 President's Message

As I write this, we are about three weeks away from the elections. I must admit I am a bit nervous about the outcome of this election. I find it concerning that there are candidates who say they will believe the election results *if they win*. It is as if they are setting the scenario for trouble in case they do not win. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of divisiveness in our country from the last election results. This saddens me, and I hope that we can find some common ground with those who we may differ on political issues. I do like how some candidates are trying to stay positive and are focused on the issues. Staying focused on the issues does make it easier to clarify with whom you align. The more I hear about how things unfolded after the last election, the more I realize how close we came to losing our democracy. According to several historians, our democracy is still extremely fragile. If you have looked at our history, such as in the 1930's, this is not the first time that our government has been threatened by citizens within our country. I hope each of you exercises your right to vote and to stand up for what you believe. Thank you to everyone who has done anything to help get a candidate of your choice elected.

With the rate of inflation increasing at such a rapid rate, there is a small bright spot. Retirees receiving Social Security benefits should see an 8.7% increase in their monthly benefit for 2023. There is concern that while the increase is the largest in 40 years, it may put stress on the entire system. This could give cause to those who have been trying to privatize Medicare and Social Security to move forward with their plan. Please pay attention to what is going on with this. If asked to contact a legislator about the issues surrounding Medicare and Social Security, or to attend a rally, or other event, please do so. Our future depends on it.

This time of year can get extremely confusing with all of the Medicare Advantage plans reaching out to you with their offerings. If you have health insurance through the district that you retired from, please DO NOT make any changes until you contact someone from your district and from your union to determine how a change could impact your coverage.

The holidays are fast approaching as evidenced by the recent October deal days at Amazon, Target, Macy's, Kohl's and others. I encourage you to think about buying union made in the USA as you purchase gifts. One positive side effect of the pandemic is that many manufacturing jobs are being brought back into this country. This does mean that you might pay a little bit more to support American workers, although this is not always the case. Recently, I was purchasing some basic cotton women's tee shirts from a website that sells union-made products. I was pleasantly surprised to see that the cost was actually less than ones I had seen in the store that were made in another country.

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## The Outlook

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These are the contributions of record received from members from August 1, 2022 thru October 11, 2022. Your name will appear **only once** in *The Outlook*. **Please keep track of your contribution as to avoid multiple payments within one year.**

\* indicates paid through June 2024.

+ indicates paid beyond June 2024.

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Thanks!

**Retiree Council 12 Contribution Form July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Year Retired \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Original Union Local \_\_\_\_\_ You may share my email with AFT and NYSUT \_\_\_\_\_

My Assemblyman \_\_\_\_\_ My NY State Senator \_\_\_\_\_ My US Representative \_\_\_\_\_

I would be willing to work for my fellow retirees in the area of: \_\_\_\_\_ Legislation \_\_\_ Social Committee \_\_\_ Newsletter

Check this box if there has been a change in your contact information  \_\_\_\_\_

\$15.00 yearly contribution requested. Send to \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

**Dolores Talmadge 206 Main Street, Fort Plain, NY 13339**

**Make check payable to NYSUT Retiree Council 12.**

**Any questions, please call (518) 993-2854 .**



**RC 12 Outlook**  
**November 2022**



<http://rc12.ny.aft.org/>

**Save the Date March 13, 2023 RC General Meeting at the Holiday Inn in Johnstown**

**President’s Letter** *(Continued from page 2)*

There are many web sites where you can find items. If you are in the stores looking for things, why not ask if they carry union made in the USA? If they don’t carry them and enough people are asking for them, maybe they will reconsider and begin to order more union made in the USA products. Also, I ask you to remember the local businesses in your community and try to support them as well. When you support local businesses, you support your community at any time of the year.

Another option could be to arrange experiences with family and friends. They create unforgettable memories. Set time aside for a special walk or hike. Have the family go bowling or to the movies. Sign up to take a workshop together. Check out free events that are coming up in the community, and make a point of spending time with loved ones at a concert or special event. Whatever you do, I hope that you have a happy and healthy holiday season!

***In Solidarity, Stacey***



**Finally !!! The RC 12 TRIP to South Dakota**



## Photos from the RC 12 Trip to South Dakota.

The trip was postponed twice because of the pandemic, but happened this fall.

Thank you to Karen Wojcik-Hess for sending these shots of some of the highlights.



**Life is complicated. NYSUT Member Benefits can help.**

# PEER SUPPORT LINE



The Peer Support Line is a new service available through NYSUT Member Benefits that's offered at no cost to all NYSUT members and their families.



The Peer Support Line can help with:

- Finding mental health services or support groups
- Answering questions about Medicare and Medicaid
- Managing work-related stress
- Providing support to new members
- Sourcing elder care or caregiving services
- Assisting with marital, relationship or child rearing concerns
- Reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness

The Peer Support Line is a partnership between NYSUT Member Benefits and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care.

**For more information or assistance, call toll-free 844-444-0152.**

Nov/Dec 2022