

Kelly Tshibaka
Commissioner

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Department of
Administration

Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

State Reminds Striking IBU Members About Pending Loss of Free Health Coverage

Letter states that in just six days, striking workers and families lose no-cost health insurance

Friday, July 24, 2019 (Anchorage) – This morning Department of Administration Commissioner Kelly Tshibaka sent a letter to all Alaska Marine Highway System employees represented by the Inlandboatman’s Union (IBU) and participating in the strike, that if the strike continues past August 1, the premium for their health insurance will not be covered by the State because they will not be receiving compensation for employment. Many IBU employees cannot afford those premiums and could lose health insurance coverage for their families if they remain on strike.

“I am deeply concerned what losing health insurance coverage could mean for our workers, their spouses and children because I represent them too,” **said Commissioner Tshibaka.** “We can prevent this from happening - but only if IBU leadership joins the administration’s negotiating team by contacting the Federal Mediator and returning to the bargaining table to work this out in the short amount of time we have left and thus end this strike.”

Starting August 1, striking employees will be responsible for paying the entire cost of their health insurance premium, in accordance with COBRA. Monthly rates are approximately \$1,000 a month for an employee, and \$2,800 a month for an employee and family.

Commissioner Tshibaka added, “I strongly encourage striking workers and family members that face the loss of their current health coverage to contact IBU leadership to learn for themselves what unresolved issues remain in the contract negotiations and to ask what it will take to get them back to the bargaining table. IBU leadership is playing politics and until that stops, our employees are the ones who are suffering.”

A copy of the Commissioner Tshibaka’s letter is attached to this press release.

For more information, please contact Special Assistant Kelly Hanke at 907-269-6293

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July 26, 2019

Dear IBU-Represented Employees:

The Inland Boatmen’s Union of the Pacific, Alaska Region (IBU) began what the State views as an illegal strike yesterday. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information regarding your pay and benefits during the strike. To the extent you continue to work, your pay and benefits will be unaffected by the strike.

The State is working diligently to reach a resolution with the IBU. We have notified the Federal Mediator of our willingness to meet with union leadership at the Mediator’s earliest convenience. We do not want our IBU employees to go without pay or benefits. We do not want our ships stuck in port and the AMHS shut down.

If the strike continues, those who participate in the strike will not be paid and will not receive unemployment benefits. In addition, if the strike extends past August 1, 2019, starting August 1, the premium for your health insurance will not be covered by the State because you will not be receiving compensation for employment. We want to give you sufficient notice of what your financial cost will be if you wish to continue coverage for yourself and/or your eligible dependents. We also want to let you know how to set up those payments.

On or after August 1st, if the strike is ongoing, striking employees will be responsible for paying the full premium, in accordance with COBRA. The current monthly COBRA rates are as follows:

Plan	Rate
COBRA and LWOP Employee only	
Medical, Standard	\$1,007.78
Medical, Economy	\$584.18
Medical, Consumer	\$505.26
Dental, Standard	\$55.73
Dental, Economy	\$24.52
Vision, Managed	\$13.45
COBRA and LWOP Employee + FAMILY	
Medical, Standard	\$2,761.45
Medical, Economy	\$1,554.92

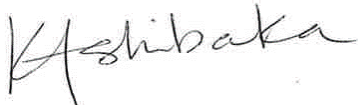
Medical, Consumer	\$1,330.50
Dental, Standard	\$146.91
Dental, Economy	\$58.18
Vision, Managed	\$32.96

For more information on insurance coverage, visit <http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/cobra/cobraInfo.html>

If you have questions about the open issues in the negotiations, please contact your IBU leadership. The State has informed a federal mediator and the IBU that it remains ready to return to the bargaining table with the Union and the mediator upon the mediator's request.

I hope this communication answers some of the questions you may have about the impact of the strike. If you have further questions about your pay or benefits, please submit them in writing to the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations (DOA.DOP.LaborRelations@alaska.gov) for our response and answer.

Sincerely,



Kelly Tshibaka

Commissioner, Department of Administration