

April 8, 2020

Dr. Robert R. Redfield, MD
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Mailstop F-80
4770 Buford Highway, NE
Atlanta GA 30341-3717

Dear Dr. Redfield:

The United Food & Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), America's largest food and retail union, represents over 900 thousand members who work at grocery stores, pharmacies, food processing, and meatpacking plants. As all Americans now know, these hard-working men and women are on the public frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The jobs these incredible food and health workers do is more essential than ever because they are ensuring – *at great risk to their own health* – that every American family has access to food, prescription drugs, and other necessary supplies. Given the public role these workers have, and the close proximity with which they must interact with other people, it is vital that more is done to protect them – and by extension, our nation's food supply.

The current workplace reality facing these food workers is that they must work in conditions where they are regularly in close contact with others – conditions well within the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) [six-foot recommendation](#) where spread of COVID-19 can occur.

Given the growing national number of COVID-19 cases, and the need to protect the health and safety workers and their essential roles during this national crisis, we are urgently requesting that the CDC issue the following immediate and mandatory guidance for grocery stores, pharmacies, food processing, and meatpacking facilities.

Grocery Stores and Pharmacies

1. In-Store Social Distancing:

- Limit the number of consumers in a store at any given time to 20 to 30 percent of the store's capacity.
- Implement procedures to ensure that both employees and customers always remain at least six feet apart.
- Procedures should include a marked "social distancing line" which begins six feet away from all checkout counters.

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2. Improve Disinfecting, Sanitizing & Hygiene Practices:

- Employees must be provided with sufficient break times to wash their hands as necessary or, at a minimum, every 30 minutes.
- Sanitize frequent touchpoints, including point of sale terminals at registers throughout the day.
- Provide disinfecting wipes for customers to disinfect carts, as well as at cash registers.
- Designate employee(s) to ensure cleaning guidelines set by the CDC are followed.
- Provide set time to allow for stores to be properly sanitized and re-stocked.

3. Mandate Wearing of Personal Protective Equipment:

- Mandate that all workers wear masks, gloves, and any other personal protective equipment (PPE) available at the workplace.
- Mandate all employers to provide N95 masks, gloves, and other PPE when it becomes available.

4. Urge Americans to Help Save Lives by Shopping Smart

- Call on all Americans to practice the following each time they visit a grocery store or pharmacy:
 - Always wear a [cloth face cover](#), ideally a mask, when inside the store.
 - Limit number of shoppers to one per family
 - Practice social distancing throughout the store – not just at check-out stands.
 - Properly discard their own PPE in trash cans.
 - Respect special shopping times for seniors.

Food Processing and Packing Plants

1. Improve Safety Conditions:

- Mandate that all employers provide PPE, and that workers wear PPE during the workday.
- Ensure social distancing practices are implemented across the workplace at all times where possible.
- When social distancing is not possible, PPE must be provided and used by all employees. No exceptions.
- Make sure that safety practices are clearly posted throughout facility and are in the necessary languages for employees to read.
- Provide PPEs for workers, including faces masks.

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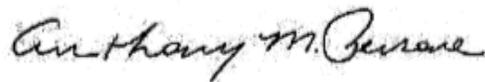
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As we hope you will agree, all of the practices and measures recommended above are an urgent matter of worker and public safety. The simple fact is that the national guidelines and recommendations that the CDC announces can and will directly influence the behavior and the actions of workers, employers, and the general public. Given the direct health threat faced by these food workers, we believe it is absolutely critical that the CDC take action before this growing crisis threatens our nation's food supply.

Please know that our entire organization of 1.3 million members are prepared to work together with you and the CDC to help protect these workers and save as many lives as possible by limiting the spread of this terrible disease.

Thank you, and I hope to speak with you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Benare". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

International President