NEWS RELEASE
STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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For more information contact:
Jason Moon
517-282-0041

Over 1 Million Michigan Workers Affected by COVID-19 Now Receiving Unemployment Benefits

UIA has added staff and resources to quickly disburse more than $1.6 billion in unemployment benefits to Michigan working families hurt by COVID-19

LANSING, MICH. The Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) has provided benefits to 1,018,315 Michigan workers who are unemployed as a result of COVID-19. The agency also disbursed more than $1.66 billion in payments since March 15. The most recent U.S. Dept. of Labor report showed 1,178,021 Michiganders filed unemployment claims between March 15 – April 18. Most workers who have not yet received unemployment benefits will be eligible in the coming weeks once they complete the federal requirement to certify their claim.

"We are working hard to provide emergency financial assistance to those affected by COVID-19, with more than 1 million Michiganders receiving benefits," said Michigan Dept. of Labor and Economic Opportunity Director Jeff Donofrio. "While Michigan's unemployment system appears to be outpacing the rest of the country in paying benefits, much work remains for those who still need help completing their claim. We will not rest until everyone receives the benefits they are entitled to."

In conjunction with the federal CARES Act, Michigan was among the first states in the nation to begin sending the additional $600 federal payments in Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC) and make the unemployment application available to self-employed workers and independent contractors through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). In a recent *Detroit Free Press* report, Michele Evermore, senior policy analyst of Washington, D.C., nonprofit National Employment Law Project, said the state has been uniquely responsive to the crisis. Michigan is one of the few states already issuing the additional $600 pandemic benefit handed down from the federal government, she said. Evermore credited Gov. Gretchen Whitmer for improved access to benefits.

Added Capacity
The UIA has extended its call center hours and added hundreds of customer facing staff. The agency has also built in new tools to its online system connecting more than 100 staff to resolve technical issues like locked accounts.

Historical Demand
In the weeks preceding the pandemic, the UIA received around 5,000 new weekly unemployment claims. During the Great Recession, the weekly high was around 77,000 in 2009.

Unemployment claims during COVID-19:

Week-Ending March 21:	128,806
Week-Ending March 28:	304,335
Week-Ending April 4:	388,554
Week-Ending April 11:	222,207
Week-Ending April 18:	134,119
Five Week Total:	**1,178,021**

How to File and Certify
The fastest and easiest way to file and certify a claim is online at Michigan.gov/UIA. More than 90% of all claims are filed and certified on the 24hr website. Customers are urged to use the site during off-peak hours between 8pm-8am. For anyone having difficulty with their account, the UIA Call Center - 866-500-0017 - is available 8am-6pm Mon-Fri and 7am-2pm on Saturday. Customers in the call center and online chat queues before closing time will have their calls or chats resolved that day.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

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