



## Psych Techs are entitled to receive ATO for specified COVID-19 related leave

After the State of California moved to exempt Psych Techs from the expanded employee leave benefits created by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, CAPT representatives immediately went to work pressuring the state to deliver an alternative extended paid leave benefit in the form of Administrative Time Off for BU 18 employees. ATO is a form of paid administrative leave status initiated by appointing authorities for a variety of reasons.

CAPT argued that Psych Techs are essential personnel reporting for duty each day on the front lines of this pandemic inside facilities that are critical to the operations of the state. CAPT impressed how necessary it is, in the interest of COVID-19 containment and suppression, that employees not be forced to dip into their leave banks for work missed due to a COVID-19 illness or due to the presumption of the disease, pending testing, especially if the presumption is that the disease was contracted as a result of the employee's essential work.

Effective April 1, 2020, all BU 18 employees who are exempt from the FFCRA are eligible to receive up to 14 calendar days of ATO if they are unable to work or telework because they are subject to quarantine by federal, state, local quarantine or isolation order or as advised by a local health care provider to self-quarantine, due to COVID-19. Employees must provide a letter from the county public health department or a note from their medical provider, which indicates the employee must self-quarantine, isolate, or tested positive for COVID-19. The medical substantiation must also indicate the reason for absence is related to COVID-19. CDCR is reserving the right to determine eligibility on a case-by-case basis. Please note that if you are sent home from your facility's screening tent, you are allotted one day of ATO.

The ATO is not dependent upon a pending COVID-19 test result; however, if a COVID-19 test has been ordered and the result is negative, your ATO will cease upon a negative test result. If you receive a negative test result and are too ill to return to work, you must utilize your personal leave credits for the remainder of your illness-related absence.

To utilize ATO, you must follow proper facility call-in procedures and notify your supervisor of your leave type. Contact your Human Resources department for possible forms and additional procedures.

For assistance or questions concerning your facility's procedures, contact your local chapter. For all other ATO assistance, please contact Tessa Hannula at [tessa.fmla@yahoo.com](mailto:tessa.fmla@yahoo.com). Tessa is the secretary at the Atascadero Chapter and is CAPT's FMLA expert. Tessa has been instrumental as an advocate and navigator of our leave rights during this unprecedented pandemic. BU 18 and the CAPT Board of Directors owe Tessa a great deal of gratitude for her tireless advocacy on behalf of our members.