



## **IMPORTANT NEWS:**

### **JOCKEYS ARE NOW ELIGIBLE FOR STATE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

April 2, 2020- During these challenging and unprecedented times, many jockeys are unable to earn a living as the tracks where they typically ride have been shut down due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Guild would like to advise our members that **FOR THE FIRST TIME, JOCKEYS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR STATE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE** under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”).

The CARES Act includes expanded rights to unemployment compensation for individuals who are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work due to various reasons related to the coronavirus. This assistance is known as “PUC” – Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. Notably, the CARES Act provides a special unemployment compensation program for gig workers, independent contractors, and self-employed individuals, such as jockeys. The United States Department of Labor is currently in process of developing guidelines for the qualifications.

The CARES Act also provides for payments of an additional \$600 per week in unemployment compensation benefits above and beyond what an individual is otherwise entitled to under state law, for up to four months. Further, the CARES Act extends an individual’s ability to receive unemployment benefits to a total of 39 weeks, through December 31, 2020.

Most states have waived the usual one week waiting period because the federal government is funding the costs. Jockeys may be eligible to apply for benefits from more than one state **BUT CAN ONLY APPLY FOR PUC IN ONE STATE**. Unemployment benefits vary from state to state so it is essential for you to verify the requirements and procedures in the states where you regularly ride to determine which state will provide you with the best benefit.

States have been advised that the money under the CARES Act should be available around mid-April. However, please note that some states are not yet accepting applications because the regulations to implement the CARES Act for independent contractors have not been published. You should contact the State Unemployment Insurance Office in the state where you will apply to determine if they are accepting applications from independent contractors. You may need to use your 2019 tax returns or other documents to show your average weekly income to determine the amount of your regular benefit under your state’s reemployment benefits.

Please visit the Guild’s web site ([www.jockeysguild.com](http://www.jockeysguild.com)) for a listing of State Unemployment Office websites. In most states you can apply online.

The Guild will continue to keep our members updated on our website as we work through this time. May all of you and your families stay safe and healthy.