

# memo



**To:** Agency-Wide/NACL Board of Directors  
**From:** Graham Morry, Executive Director  
**Date:** May 27, 2020  
**Re:** CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19 UPDATE

## Current Situation

Hi folks – things have remained stable since our last update, with the total number of COVID-19 cases standing at 127 (as of yesterday) on Vancouver Island out of 2,550 noted today, province-wide (with nine cases being newly diagnosed within the last 24 hours). The recovery rate has also been very encouraging, hovering around the 80% mark.

## Pandemic Pay Update

As Randy indicated last week, we are pleased to announce that the government will be releasing funds for a temporary wage increase for frontline workers. See the attached bulletin from the Community Social Services Employers Association (CSSEA) for further information.

We are still awaiting further details/instructions, but it appears this will come as a lump sum payment sometime in July. If the situation changes or we can get money out faster, we will communicate this immediately.

## Current Protocols

In regard to our current protocols, there will be no change for the foreseeable future; however, we will continue to facilitate family visits in as safe a manner as possible on a case-by-case basis. Given the nature of the work we do, it is imperative that we remain diligent in keeping all of us as safe and protected from infection as possible.

## Future COVID-19 Updates

Unless needed, these updates will come every two weeks rather than weekly for the rest of the summer.

## In Conclusion...

I'm always here if you have any questions or concerns – please don't hesitate to contact me anytime.

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**CSSEA Info** keeps members informed about human resources and labour relations issues in the community social services sector.

For more information, contact your human resources/ labour relations consulting team.

## BC'S TEMPORARY PANDEMIC PAY PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

### Overview

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that all provinces and territories have confirmed, or are in the process of confirming, plans to cost share wage top-ups for their essential workers. The Government of Canada committed to provide up to \$3 billion in support to increase the wages of low-income essential workers. Each province or territory is individually responsible for determining eligible workers within the available funding envelope.

Today the Province announced and provided details on how BC employees, including those working in community social services, can access the federal and provincial governments' cost-shared plan that will provide temporary pandemic pay for essential workers.

B.C.'s approach focuses on:

- Frontline workers in health, social services and corrections who provide a range of in-person, clinical and supportive services to vulnerable populations where physical distancing is difficult or impossible.
- Pandemic pay will be equivalent to \$4 per hour and delivered in lump sum payments.
- The start date of the 16-week period is March 15<sup>th</sup> to reflect the height of the province's pandemic response.

The program will provide temporary \$4 per hour pandemic pay to individuals working on the front lines of our sector. Eligibility criteria include the following:

- Employees must have worked straight-time hours at any point during the 16-week period starting March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- It does not apply to excluded management staff, fee for service providers or employees on leave.
- It does not apply to employees who received additional compensation as part of BC Housing's Safe Staffing Strategy.
- Programs that have been closed or transitioned to a primarily virtual model are not eligible for pandemic pay.

CSSEA is working with the Province and will be able to answer questions on eligible job classifications.

### Process for Receiving Funds

CSSEA will work with employers and funding ministries to determine a process to report eligibility and transfer funding in the coming days. It is likely that many employees will receive their pandemic pay in one lump sum at the conclusion of the 16-week period, after employers have reconciled hours worked with their funders. The funding for temporary pandemic pay is available for provincially-funded programs only, and only for the portion of workers who are funded by the province. For more information, consult the Province's [news release](#) and [webpage](#).