



HSA welcomes \$4/hour pandemic pay premium for frontline health care and social services workers

May 19, 2020

Health Sciences Association, the union representing 20,000 specialized health care and social services workers in British Columbia, welcomes today's announcement by BC Finance Minister Carole James of a \$4 an hour pandemic pay premium for frontline health care and social service workers working in the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

"HSA has been at the forefront of the fight for recognition for all members of the health care and social services teams, and today's announcement is a significant and welcome response to all our efforts. I particularly want to thank the hundreds of members who emailed Health Minister Adrian Dix detailing the work they do to deliver the care British Columbians count on - in this pandemic and every day," HSA President Val Avery said.

"This is a significant investment by the federal and provincial governments in front line workers - estimated at about \$40 million for HSA members alone," she said. The fund for frontline workers is cost-shared by the federal and provincial governments, with the federal government funding 75 per cent, and the provincial government covering 25 per cent of the cost.

Today's announcement ensures that all HSA members working under the HSPBA, CBA, and NBA collective agreements will receive pandemic pay at a rate of \$4 an hour for 16 weeks retroactive to March 15. Many members covered by the CSSBA collective agreement will also receive the premium. There is no requirement to apply for the fund, which will be administered by employers.

Government and employers are working on the details of administration of the payment, but anticipate the premiums will be paid as a lump sum.

"Health science professionals have been on the front lines every day of this pandemic - from the respiratory therapists and medical radiation therapists, to the pharmacists, dietitians, social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists - and the dozens and dozens of other health science professions bringing critical expertise to the health care team," she said.

"In social services and community health settings, our members are putting their own health at risk. Their commitment to their clients and patients has been an inspiration, and this is significant and tangible recognition of the work they do to support some of the province's most vulnerable people," Avery said.

While the pandemic pay premium is important recognition of the role all frontline workers are playing in the province's pandemic response, HSA is working to ensure the next stages of the response include strategies to ensure the health care and social services systems are equipped to meet the challenges ahead.

"Over the past few months, we have been in constant communication with government and employers about our members' roles and contributions through this crisis. And as the province moves into the next phase of this pandemic response, we are working to ensure the supports and services British Columbians count on will be there for them," she said.

In health care, this means addressing long-standing challenges associated with acute shortages in health science professions, and a fractured response to occupational health and safety issues. In community social services it means addressing chronic underfunding of critical programs.

See links:

- [BC Government News Release and backgrounder](#)
- [BC Government Temporary Pandemic Pay website](#)

- [Print](#)
- [PDF](#)

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