



April 30, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

By email: doug.ford@pc.ola.org

Re: Pandemic Pay for Essential Hospital Workers

Dear Premier Ford:

I am writing on behalf of our front-line members providing essential services in hospitals across Ontario, in the continued delivery of life saving radiation cancer treatments.

We were pleased by the government's announcement to support front-line healthcare workers in Ontario with temporary pandemic pay. The sacrifices and dedication to service demonstrated by Ontario's front-line health care workers has been exemplary and continues to be a critical factor in the ongoing efforts to protect Ontarians and reduce the dreadful impact of COVID-19.

In communications concerning the announcement, we noted that radiation specialists working in Ontario's cancer centres were absent from the list of eligible front-line workers included for pandemic pay. We recognize that the list of eligible workers provides examples, and is not intended to be exhaustive, and we therefore seek to confirm that our members are included in the pandemic pay program.

I wanted to share with you a few examples of the requirements faced by these workers on the front lines of COVID-19, in maintaining continued essential treatment programs for cancer patients. As essential hospital employees, radiation specialists are:

- subject to all the emergency provisions of the Emergency Orders issued for hospitals as [Ontario Regulation 74/20](#), which include:
 - redeployment anywhere in the hospital with the appropriate training or education as needed;
 - redeployment to work in a COVID-19 Assessment Centre; and
 - cancellation of vacations, leaves of absence or other leaves.
- required to wear Personal Protective Equipment during all work activities
- required to maintain a high degree of precautions to reduce the high risk of infection for cancer patients, similar to the precautions required in a long-term care environment. Full

droplet precautions and PPE, including N-95 masks, face visors, and gowns are utilized when Radiation Therapists are treating individuals who have tested positive for, or are exhibiting symptoms of, COVID-19. Various radiation therapies are considered Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs), which create a higher risk when treating patients with COVID-19 as they expel. The [Chief Medical Officer of Health Directive # 5 for Hospitals](#) requires that N95 respirators, or approved equivalent or better protection, must be used by all health care workers in the room where AGMPs are being performed, are frequent or probable.

- prohibited under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act* from refusing unsafe work when the circumstances are inherent in their work, a normal condition of their employment, or when the refusal to work would directly endanger the life, health or safety of another person. For example, Radiation Therapists do not have the right to refuse to treat a cancer patient if the patient has contracted COVID-19.
- prohibited from withdrawal of services under the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act*.

Several Radiation Therapists have been exposed to COVID-19 in their workplaces and have been required to self-isolate at home for 14 days following the exposure. Fortunately, and in no small part due to the concerted efforts of these workers to protect their patients, their colleagues and themselves, to date we have not experienced a case of one of our members contracting COVID-19 in the workplace.

I am sure that you will agree that these workers are indeed worthy of the additional support and recognition intended by the pandemic pay announcement and am seeking your confirmation that they will qualify for pandemic pay.

If you or your staff would like to speak to me directly on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Debi Daviau
President, The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada

cc: Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board
cc: Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health