

May 13, 2020

Right Honourable Justin P. J. Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2

Submitted Via Email: pm@pm.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Sick Pay Coverage Under the Employment Insurance Act (EI) During the COVID-19 Pandemic

We want to thank your government for the considerable efforts to assist individuals, businesses, and provincial governments cope with the unprecedented health and economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Your government's support to date is greatly appreciated.

Together, our collective commitment is, and must continue to be, protecting the health of Canadians. You have communicated this regularly, and have collaborated in efforts with the provinces to stem the spread of COVID-19 and to "plank" the infection curve. Minimizing COVID-19 infection rates and the number of cases requiring hospitalization is essential. As recovery begins, restoring the capacity of healthcare system to address other health needs of Canadians is imperative.

Today, we are writing you regarding sick-pay for COVID-19. Business leaders understand and fully support the need for workers who contract the disease to rest, isolate and recover. We also understand the ongoing imperative for workers with mild symptoms or who have tested positive with COVID-19 to self-isolate.

In these circumstances, we believe senior governments should shoulder any costs associated with time away from work (i.e. sick pay) associated with the current pandemic. At a time when many businesses have been hit extremely hard by the economic fallout from the pandemic, it is simply not reasonable for businesses to be expected to cover sick-pay costs for COVID-19 which, at its core, is a global pandemic and a national and provincial public health emergency.

Sick pay for employees required to self-isolate or who were found to be ineligible for provincial workers' compensation coverage through the regular claim adjudication processes should, in our view, be covered under Employment Insurance (EI) and/or Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). In this regard, we ask that your government immediately initiate discussions with provincial officials to extend COVID-19 sick pay coverage under the EI program and/or CERB.


Discussions should include which order of government “tops-up” sick pay beyond current statutory caps for EI and CERB coverage.

Prime Minister, COVID-19 is a national pandemic and, therefore, a compelling rationale exists for EI and/or CERB to provide temporary sick pay during the COVID-19 recovery period. A national program through EI (or CERB) has the added benefit of ensuring that sick-pay coverage is less variable from province to province as efforts continue to flatten the pandemic curve.


We look forward to your response to this correspondence at your earliest possible convenience. Thank you again for your government’s considerable efforts to date to help Canadians cope with the health and economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,




Greg D'Avignon
President & CEO





Bridgitte Anderson
President and CEO





Val Litwin
President & CEO





Anita Huberman
President & CEO





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- CC: Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Relations, Government of Canada
- Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, Government of Canada
- Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Government of Canada
- Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia