

# Personal Support Services Wage Enhancement

Home and Community Care Stakeholder  
Information Session

Ministry of Health, October 21, 2020

# Introduction

- On October 1, 2020, the government introduced the temporary wage enhancement for Personal Support Workers (PSWs) and other individuals delivering Personal Support Services (PSS) in the Home and Community Care (HCC), long-term care, public hospitals, and social services sectors.
- This initiative is intended to help attract and retain the workforce needed urgently to care for patients, clients and residents in response in publicly funded sectors critical to the COVID response.
- The initiative is effective October 1, 2020 with the intent to continue to March 31, 2021 in alignment with renewals of O. Reg. 195/20 under *the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*.
- This temporary increase will provide \$3/hour for eligible workers in publicly funded HCC; \$3/hour to eligible workers in long-term care; \$2/hour for eligible workers in public hospitals; and \$3/hour to eligible workers in children, community and social services providing personal direct support services for activities of daily living.
- Program implementation details are still being finalized. This presentation is intended to support key partners in planning for implementation.

## **Need for PSS Workforce in Home and Community Settings**

- PSWs and other workers delivering PSS are vital to Ontario's health care system. In HCC, 70% of home care volumes are for PSS.
- The HCC sector is facing recruitment and retention challenges, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.
- HCC capacity is needed now to support bed reductions in hospitals and long-term care homes resulting from measures to address the ongoing effects of COVID.
- The government's fall preparedness plan, *Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19*, includes an investment of \$101M to help support up to 850 new high needs patients who require high levels of PSS and other services to the right level of care in a home or community care setting.

# Eligibility for the Wage Enhancement in HCC

Workers providing **publicly funded PSS hours** will receive the \$3/hour wage increase starting October 1, 2020.

## Eligible Workers

The wage increase would apply to individuals providing PSS (whether or not they have a PSW certificate) through the following programs:

- Services provided under *Home Care and Community Services Act (HCCSA)*, including but not limited to:
  - Home care provided through LHIN-contracted service providers, Family Managed Home Care, hospices, and other programs.
  - LHIN- and Ministry-funded approved agencies for home care, community support services, assisted living services in supportive housing, service for people with Acquired Brain Injury, bundled care, adult day programs, short-term transitional care, transitional care models.
- The Homemakers and Nurses Services Program for First Nations communities and municipalities.
- The Direct Funding Program administered by the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto.

## Key Elements

- The wage increase would only apply to **direct hours** of PSS care delivered by eligible workers.
- **In-person or virtual PSS** visits are eligible.
- PSS delivered by **any worker regardless of their job title or other roles**. For example, if a supervisor is delivering PSS, the PSS hours are eligible for the increase.
- Includes sub-contracted providers.

## Ineligible Expenses

- Other workers, such as those delivering privately funded PSS or other publicly-funded HCC services.
- Indirect hours of care (e.g. travel time, training).
- Administrative costs of implementation.
- Managerial work that does not constitute direct care.

# Application and Payment Approach

- \$3/hour would be provided for each eligible worker's time spent delivering direct, publicly funded PSS.
- \$3/hour would be provided to all eligible workers, regardless of their current wage or employment status (i.e., casual, part-time, full time).
- 22.7% for statutory entitlements and employer contributions (equating to \$0.68/hour) would be provided in addition to the \$3/hour. These include:
  - Entitlements under *Employment Standards Act*, collective agreements, and/or employment agreements.
  - Employer contributions such as the Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, and the Employer Health Tax.
  - Increases in an employer's WSIB insurable earnings due to the PSW wage increase.
- Funding will flow through usual channels.
  - The Ministry will flow funding to Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) for their contracted providers and community agencies.
  - The LHINs will flow the funds to employers, amending existing contracts and transfer payment agreements to require that the funding increase be added to wages for eligible employees.
  - The ministry would amend transfer payment agreements for programs it funds directly.
  - The Ministry will use the attestation and audit tools to ensure employer compliance.

## Considerations for Workers:

- Workers can expect to receive the temporary increase as part of their regular pay cheques.
  - Pay for eligible work will be retroactive to October 1, 2020.
  - The temporary wage enhancement is supplemental to pay increases for eligible workers through collective agreements or employment contracts (e.g. merit increases, negotiated pay increases, promotions).

# Other Considerations

- Implementation of the temporary wage increase relies on an exception for temporary COVID-19 related payments set out in O. Reg. 195/20 under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020.
  - It is anticipated that LHINs will work with employers to establish payment cycles that allow for adjustments in the flow of funds to employees in alignment with the above regulation.
  - It is anticipated that employers will be cautious about making payments to workers far in advance, in order to ensure that all expenditures are consistent with the rules and regulations in effect.
  - Further information will be provided.
- Decisions regarding wages after March 31, 2020, will be dependent on an evaluation of how well the temporary increase addresses recruitment and retention challenges, as well as the implications for other workforces.
  - Greater-than typical reporting requirements will be required to support this evaluation. In developing these requirements, the ministry will attempt to balance administrative burdens with the province's need to manage a crucial program during a pandemic.

# Next Steps

- The ministry is finalizing program implementation details and will provide final implementation parameters soon.
- The ministry is responding to questions and implementation advice.
- Stakeholders may submit additional questions directly to the Ministry.
- Stakeholders may submit questions relating to their LHIN contracts or funding agreements directly to their LHINs.