

## COVID-19 Update – April 1, 2020

**BC Update:** As of the last update, 129 new cases were confirmed, for a total of 1,013 cases. There were five more deaths, for a total of 24 deaths. Interior health is investigating an outbreak of temporary foreign workers at an agricultural nursery in West Kelowna. Almost half of all cases in BC have fully recovered. The provincial health officer stated that we are at a critical juncture. Over the next two weeks we will either see cases rise dramatically or drop off. It is vital that everyone who is not an essential worker continue to avoid unnecessary travel. That we avoid non-essential trips out of the home. Essential workers who are required to work must to ensure they are following the proper safety protocols and using the proper protective equipment. On timelines, the provincial health officer stated that BC won't likely be back to normal life until at least the summer, and even then we will need to prepare for a second wave in the fall. Until a vaccine is found, some restrictions will be in place.

**State of Emergency Extended:** In a provincial address last night, Premier John Horgan announced the extension of the provincial state of emergency until April 14, 2020. Declarations last for two weeks and can be extended by two weeks at a time.

**Testing:** As of March 30, 42,028 individuals were tested. The province is conducting approximately 3,500 tests every day, which is a higher percentage of the population than South Korea. Testing is targeted toward those who pose the greatest risk of an outbreak - such as those in long term care homes, hospitals and health care workers. All swabs of respiratory concerns are also being tested. Testing is excluding anyone not in those categories, because you are supposed to stay home if you have any symptoms of illness, and if you do so, you should not infect anyone else and therefore would not spread the virus further. There is a BC app for checking your symptoms - search BC COVID-19.

**Child Care for Essential Service Workers:** The province has introduced a new process to match parents of children five years and younger with child care in their communities. The form can be accessed [here](#). Child care spaces will be prioritized for children whose parents work in public health and health services, social services, law enforcement, first responders and emergency response sectors. Additional spaces will then be given to families working in other crucial roles, defined as essential service workers. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has been working closely with school districts and independent schools to identify and support children, aged five to 12 years (kindergarten to Grade 6), whose parents are essential service workers to ensure they have access to care during regular before-, during- and after-school hours.

**Long Term Care Workers Pay Standardized:** In an effort to avoid short-staffing due to wage discrepancies and a recent order prohibiting working at more than one facility, the provincial government, in consultation with the Health Employers Association of BC and health sector unions, is raising long term-care workers' pay to a uniform, full-time rate.

**Hospital Parking:** Effective today, until further notice, pay parking is suspended for the public, staff and medical staff, at all health authority owned and operated sites.

**Cross Canada Response to COVID-19:** A very useful summary of how different provinces and sectors are responding to the pandemic can be found [here](#).

**Canada Emergency Response Benefit:** Information on the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit can be found [here](#).

**Income Supports for Workers during the Panedemic:** A full review of all income supports workers can access during the pandemic can be found [here](#).

In solidarity,

Justin Schmid  
CUPE Legislative Coordinator - BC Region

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