

MEMO

TO: All Staff

FROM: The PRH Senior Leadership Team and Human Resources

DATE: September 2, 2020

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Fall HR Update

Message to PRH Staff from the Senior Leadership Team

We appreciate that, as the school year is starting, some of you are nervous about what back-to-school will look like for you and your family. We continue to be in unprecedented times and wish to remind you that support and resources are available:

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 1-844-880-9142 or www.worklifehealth.com.

As essential workers, your service to our patients and families is critical as we continue to navigate the new realities of keeping ourselves, our colleagues and our patients safe. We wish to acknowledge that the departmental efforts to maintain excellent service delivery of patient care has been tremendous. Each and every one of our staff has had to change the way we deliver care for our patients, which can be challenging, at times. Your continued work and contribution to the Hospital is greatly appreciated and we truly applaud the efforts of the PRH team.

The following communication was circulated in COVID-19 Update #41 distributed on July 8, 2020”:

During the period from March 17, 2020 – June 30, 2020, the hospital was following the directives from Ontario Health and all staff on self-isolation with suspected or confirmed cases of the virus, regardless of job status, were coded “PAND”, which is a paid sick leave code for all pre-scheduled shifts. This is to advise that the Ontario Health recommendations and guidelines have since changed. Effective June 30, 2020, any absences or staff on self-isolation with a suspected or confirmed case, will defer to the normative hospital sick pay policies and/or collective agreement provisions.

The current information that we are communicating today is:

If you, or your family member reports COVID-related symptoms, Occupational Health will provide testing to you and your family member(s) to ensure an early and safe return to work as soon as practically possible for essential health care workers. Staff are required to actively participate in testing.

Staff whose family members exhibit COVID symptoms:

- Staff requiring time away from work as a result of public health measures imposed by third parties on family members, or who are quarantined but are otherwise “asymptomatic” will be permitted to take any of the following:
 - o Infectious Disease and Emergency Leave, (IDEL) Unpaid (pursuant to the *Employment Standards Act*)
 - o Personal Emergency Leave, Unpaid for circumstances which fall outside the IDEL
 - o Personal Leave of Absence, Unpaid, to be considered on a case-by-case basis
 - o Vacation (paid); advances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - o Lieu Time (paid, advances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Hospital is aware that the federal government is transitioning from the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to a simplified Employment Insurance (EI) program to provide income support to those unable to work due to COVID-19. The hospital is aware of the changes on the horizon and will modify communications on eligibility benefits as these changes evolve.

Questions and Answers

EXPOSURE AND CODING:

Q: How will I be coded if my family member exhibits COVID-19 related symptoms?

Answer: All Staff on self-isolation with suspected or confirmed cases of the virus, regardless of job status, will be coded as ISOL, an unpaid code for **all** employees. Staff will be coded as ISOL until such time they provide confirmation of their test results through Occupational Health. When on isolation, time away from work remains unpaid, unless you are granted approval for one of the above-noted leaves, further to your return-to-work.

This code does not affect the Attendance Support Program (ASP).

If staff are exposed to the virus, they should follow all updated recommendations and directives from the Renfrew County and District Health Unit.

Sick Leave for all staff will be administered in accordance with the collective agreement and HOODIP Plan (Sick Pay income replacement where staff are Totally Disabled).

For greater clarity, requiring time away from work as a result of quarantine measures does not qualify as Sick Leave.

TRAVEL:

Q: What if I have planned travel outside of Canada?

Answer: The Government of Canada continues to have in effect travel advisories and has advised Canadians to **avoid** non-essential travel outside of Canada. In considering non-essential travel, employees must include the possibility of mandatory quarantine in their requests for time off. Time away from work for travel internationally, or to an area that results in mandatory quarantine, must be **pre-approved for the totality of the combined travel/quarantine.**

CHILDCARE:

Q: What if I cannot attend work due child care requirements?

Answer: As essential workers, staff are encouraged to find alternative options for childcare. While the hospital appreciates that contingencies for childcare are limited during COVID, we would encourage staff, wherever possible, to seek out alternatives. The hospital will continue to provide testing for all staff and their family members as to facilitate an early and safe return to work.

As we have experienced during the pandemic to date, there will be ongoing changes to processes that have been put into place. We will update you on a regular basis as to these changes.

Should you have any questions about the information issued today, or other questions related to COVID-19, please continue to forward your questions to covid19questions@prh.email.