

### 1. What is pandemic pay and how much does an eligible employee receive?

The COVID-19 outbreak is causing staffing pressures for health service providers, particularly among frontline health care workers. Pandemic pay encourages essential staff to continue working and helps to attract prospective employees to the health sector to maintain safe staffing levels across the system.

Temporary pandemic pay is aimed at helping frontline staff who are experiencing severe challenges and are at heightened risk during the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is a targeted program designed to support employees who work in congregate care settings or primarily with vulnerable populations, where maintaining physical distancing is difficult or not possible.

The goals of this temporary pandemic pay are to:

- Provide additional support and relief to frontline workers
- Encourage staff to continue working and attract prospective employees
- Help maintain safe staffing levels and the operation of critical frontline services

Eligible workers will receive temporary pandemic pay of \$4/hour on top of their regular wages. In addition, the government will be providing monthly lump sum payments of \$250 for four months to eligible frontline workers who work over 100 hours per month. The pandemic pay will be effective for 16 weeks, from April 24, 2020 until August 13, 2020.

### 2. Am I eligible for pandemic pay?

The Government of Ontario has established eligibility for pandemic pay. Regional hospitals collaborated to define an eligible list based on government guidelines to ensure regional consistency.

The following overarching guidelines apply:

- Excludes all staff working remotely/providing virtual care. At times, clinicians may be working on-site but providing virtual patient care. In these cases, they would not be eligible for pandemic pay. Where staff are providing a combination of virtual work/in-person work, they should be paid pandemic pay for the shifts they work in-person only.
- Excludes all management/supervisory positions.
- Where staff are not eligible in their regular position, but have been redeployed to an eligible position, they should be paid pandemic pay for shifts worked in an eligible position.
- Where staff are not eligible in their regular position but have been providing break coverage for someone in an eligible position, they should be paid

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pandemic pay for the time they provided break coverage, if there is clear documentation of this coverage/time.

- Employees working in “charge” or “lead” positions that are not formal managers should be eligible for pandemic pay.

The current list of eligible employees is attached in today’s email.

### **3. Why are some frontline workers not eligible for pandemic pay?**

The Ministry of Health states they focused this initiative on frontline workers who regularly and consistently face the threat of exposure to COVID-19 in their work setting, and as such, not all frontline workers are eligible for pandemic pay according to their eligibility requirements. The Pembroke Regional Hospital recognizes that there are many frontline workers that have not been captured by the initiative and would like to be able to provide pandemic pay to all staff who are working to support our patients and community at this time. However, there is a limit to the amount of funding provided by the federal government and the Government of Ontario, and hospitals have been mandated not to increase the scope of the pandemic pay to positions that are not listed on the Government of Ontario’s eligible list.

### **4. Does The Pembroke Regional Hospital have the ability to expand the scope of eligibility for pandemic pay?**

The Emergency Order passed on May 29, 2020 clearly prohibits all employers, among other entities, from expanding eligibility for temporary pandemic pay. Consequently, funding provided by the government to employers for temporary pandemic pay must be disbursed in accordance with the government’s eligibility framework for temporary pandemic pay.

The Pembroke Regional Hospital is not permitted to use government funds of any kind to provide other forms of COVID-19-related payments to employees who are otherwise ineligible for pandemic pay. This includes (but is not limited to) any funds previously allocated to an employer for other programs, base funding allocation for operations or services delivery, etc. None of the hospitals in the Champlain region have the ability to provide payments to ineligible employees.

### **5. Why are some administrative and clerical staff included but not others?**

For administrative and clerical workers, it should be noted that the Government of Ontario’s temporary pandemic pay initiative is aimed at those workers who are critically important to the province’s response to the crisis and are at a heightened risk of exposure to COVID-19 because of their work on the front lines, directly with patients.

Our hospital recognizes that there are many frontline workers that have not been captured by the initiative and would like to be able to provide pandemic pay to all staff

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who are working to support our patients and community at this time. However, hospitals have been mandated not to increase the scope of the pandemic pay to positions that are not listed on the Government of Ontario's eligibility list.

### **6. What is meant by “client facing?”**

Client facing clerical/reception/administrative workers are positions that have direct, in-person patient interaction onsite at the workplace as a regular and ongoing requirement of their position. Virtual care, telework or remote work hours would not be eligible for pandemic pay.

### **7. If I am a part-time or a casual employee, am I eligible for pandemic pay?**

Yes, part-time and casual employees are eligible for pandemic pay if they meet the appropriate criteria listed in the Government of Ontario memo released May 27, 2020.

### **8. What is I am a summer student employed into an eligible role?**

If a summer student is employed in an eligible role, they will be eligible for pandemic pay.

### **9. Are management positions eligible for pandemic pay?**

No, as per the Government of Ontario directives, management positions, including supervisory positions, are not eligible to receive pandemic pay.

### **10. How much will eligible employees receive?**

There are two types of pandemic pay employees may be eligible for:

- A temporary top up of \$4.00 per hour worked on top of regular wages
- A monthly lump sum payment of \$250.00 for eligible employees who work at least 100 hours in a designated four-week period (April 24, 2020 to May 21, 2020; May 22, 2020 to June 18, 2020; June 19, 2020 to July 16, 2020; and July 17, 2020 to August 13, 2020 respectively).

Both the temporary top up and monthly lump sum payments will be effective for the 16-week period of April 24, 2020 to August 13, 2020.

### **11. How and when will eligible employees receive their payment?**

Eligible employees will receive the temporary top-up of \$4.00 per worked hour and monthly lump sum payment of \$250 directly from the hospital through payroll.

Based on receiving the funding from the Ministry, PRH anticipates providing the Temporary Pandemic Pay to all eligible staff on the following schedule.

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## Staff FAQs: Pandemic Pay



There will be two installments:

- Payment #1 – for the period of April 24 to June 30; will be paid in late August
- Payment #2 – for the period of July 1 to August 13; will be paid in late September

### **12. What if I work at multiple eligible workplaces?**

Eligible employees who work for multiple eligible workplaces will be required to provide an attestation of hours worked to their primary employer. The primary workplace is the organization an employee has worked the most hours within the specified dates.

Eligible employees who work at least 100 hours of eligible work per four-week period, may receive a \$250 lump sum. It can be over 100 hours worked with multiple eligible employers, but only one lump sum per four-week period is paid by the primary employer. Where the 100 hours are split across two or more employers, the employee must provide an attestation to the primary employer of the other hours worked.

If you have worked for multiple employers and you have identified PRH as your Primary Employer, it is your responsibility to provide the completed attestation form (attached as part of this email) by August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to [kevin.dulude@prh.email](mailto:kevin.dulude@prh.email).

### **13. How does pandemic pay impact my salary, pension and benefits?**

It is indicated in the Government of Ontario memo posted May 27, 2020 that pandemic pay will not be considered part of an employee's base salary, benefits or pensionable earnings.

### **14. How is the pandemic pay premium calculated if I work overtime hours?**

Hourly and pandemic lump sum payment are administered in accordance with the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the applicable employment contracts including collective agreement(s). The pandemic pay premium will be paid in accordance to your overtime rate. For example, for the hours worked at time and one half, the premium will also be paid at time and one half.

### **15. Will I be taxed on the \$4/hr premium and lump sum payment?**

Yes, all regular statutory deductions will apply to both the \$4/hr premium, as well as the lump sum payment. This will include CPP, EI and Income Tax.

### **16. Will I receive pandemic pay if I am on vacation or any authorized paid leave?**

Pandemic pay will not be provided for the time you were not in the workplace for any reason, including:

- vacation

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## Staff FAQs: Pandemic Pay



- any authorized paid leave, including sick leave
- time and benefits awarded under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

The \$4/hr premium and \$250.00 lump sum payment only apply to the hours worked, including shifts worked on statutory holidays and overtime hours.

### **17. If I resign or retire, am I still eligible to receive pandemic pay for the period they were working?**

Yes. Staff who have since resigned or retired will still receive pandemic pay retroactively for eligible hours worked, subject to the terms of their employment contract or applicable collective agreement.

### **18. Will pandemic pay continue after the 16 weeks?**

No, the temporary pandemic pay will only be effective for 16 weeks, from April 24, 2020 until August 13, 2020.