

November 30, 2020

## Re: Personal Support Worker Temporary Wage Enhancement

Dear Long-Term Care Home Licensees:

This letter is further to the recent letter from the Honorable Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care, informing you that the Ministry of Long-Term Care (“the ministry”) will be providing a temporary wage enhancement to Personal Support Workers (PSWs) working in the long-term care (LTC) sector. This is to support retention and recruitment of PSWs in LTC homes in order to stabilize and increase LTC system capacity, during this second wave of COVID-19 and the influenza season.

The temporary wage enhancement funding of up to \$135,963,500 will be provided to eligible operators that are party to a Letter of Agreement for Ministry Direct Funding to Long-Term Care Homes (Direct Funding Agreement, or DFA) with the ministry. The associated *Long-Term Care PSW Wage Enhancement Funding Policy* is the primary applicable ministry document with respect to the temporary wage enhancement under Schedule A of the DFA between each LTC home licensee and the ministry.

### **Funding Approach**

Temporary wage enhancement measures will be in effect for an anticipated 26-week period effective October 1, 2020. The temporary wage enhancement will be reviewed on a regular basis and could extend through March 31, 2021, in connection with regulations made under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*. The wage enhancement will consist of:

- **A temporary top-up based on hourly wages:** Eligible LTC staff will receive \$3 per hour for all hours worked.

The temporary wage enhancement is non-pensionable earnings (with the exception of Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions), is not part of an employee’s base salary, will have no impact on benefits plans paid by employers, and will be subject to statutory deductions such as CPP, Employment Insurance, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and Employer Health Tax.

Furthermore, this wage enhancement does not apply to time when eligible staff are not working, including: vacation, any authorized paid leave (including sick leave), and time and benefits awarded under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

It will be administered in accordance with the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* and/or the applicable collective agreement(s).

Payments to LTC home licensees will be provided in two instalments:

1. The first estimated instalment will equal 75% of the LTC home's allocation and will be provided in December 2020 as an unscheduled payment.
2. The second estimated instalment will be provided in January 2021 and will equal the remaining balance (or 25% of the LTC home's allocation).

The ministry requests that employers add the wage enhancement to their employees' regular paycheques or include it in contracts with external agencies.

### ***Eligibility Criteria***

Any PSW (full-time, part-time and casual) who:

- (a) is hired as a PSW in accordance with the requirements set out in Section 47 of O. Reg. 79/10 under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act 2007*, or
- (b) is hired under O. Reg. 95/20: Streamlining Requirements for Long-Term Care Homes, under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19 Act) 2020*, provided it was clear the individual was hired as a PSW

is eligible for the Temporary Wage Enhancement.

Staff who are not direct employees of an LTC home and are hired by the home either on a contract or through a third-party agency are also eligible for the temporary wage enhancement. LTC home licensees are encouraged to secure a commitment in writing from their respective third-party agencies that the contract staff is receiving the appropriate temporary wage enhancement amounts.

To the extent that there may be conflicts between the provision of this temporary wage enhancement and the requirements under the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019* (PSPSFGA), this wage enhancement 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*. This ensures that eligible employers who are subject to wage moderation under the PSPSFGA are able to provide eligible PSWs with the temporary wage enhancement.

Further details of the funding approach, the eligibility requirements, as well as the terms, conditions and accountability requirements are outlined in the associated *Long-Term Care PSW Temporary Wage Enhancement Funding Policy*. In case of an inconsistency between any documentation, including this letter, and the policy, the terms of the policy shall be authoritative.

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to improving the quality of LTC in Ontario, particularly during this unprecedented time. We will continue to work together to encourage the stabilization, retention and recruitment of PSWs during this second wave of COVID-19 in LTC homes.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the ministry by email at [MLTC.Correspondence@ontario.ca](mailto:MLTC.Correspondence@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sheila Bristo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Sheila Bristo  
Assistant Deputy Minister

- c: Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario
- Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long Term Care Home Association
- Jane Sinclair, Chair, Board of Directors, AdvantAge Ontario
- Brent Gingerich, Chair, Board of Directors, Ontario Long Term Care Home Association
- Monika Turner, Director of Policy, Associations of Municipalities of Ontario
- Michael Jacek, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
- Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care
- Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister, LTC Policy Division
- Adriana Iburguchi, Director, Strategic Initiatives Branch
- Abby Dwosh, Director, LTC Funding and Programs Branch
- Jim Yuill, Director, Financial Management Branch
- Jeffrey Graham, Director, Fiscal Oversight & Performance Branch