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To all Premiers across Canada,

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is a public health crisis without precedent and requires unprecedented cooperation and action from all levels of government to adequately protect the health and safety of everyone in Canada.

Time is of the essence. Alongside urgent efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus, workers are not only concerned for their health but are bracing for massive economic disruption, from reduced work hours to cancelled shifts to layoffs. Governments appear to grasp the extent of this crisis, and some have taken important first steps to support workers and their families, while others have been slow to act. There can be no delay. Action is needed now.

As the largest private sector union in Canada, Unifor represents more than 315,000 workers in nearly every sector of the economy. The concern our union has for the health and well-being of our membership cannot be overstated. Many in the hospitality, gaming, airline, and other industries have already begun to face reprisals, layoffs, and other hardships related to the viral outbreak and government decisions to contain the pandemic such as border closures, restrictions on events and public gatherings, and others.

As such, and in conjunction with our recommendations to the federal government, our union strongly urge all provincial governments immediately implement the following measures and actions to effectively contain the spread of COVID-19 and preserve the health and safety of our members and all workers in Canada:

1. Institute a minimum of 14 days of paid sick leave whether a worker has been formally quarantined by a health official, or been asked to self-isolate;
2. Establish special provisions that provide workers paid leave to care for children affected by government-mandated school and daycare closures;
3. Establish direct, emergency income assistance measures to all workers and families - including those ineligible for Employment Insurance benefits (including seniors, students, recipients of social assistance, as well as gig economy, contract, and precarious workers);
4. Ensure all workers are protected from any employer reprisals for any and all absences as workers are required to provide childcare, care for elders and dependents and other mitigating circumstances resulting from the ongoing pandemic;

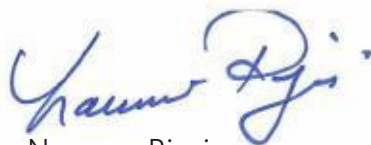
5. Workers' Compensation Boards adopt an irrebuttable presumption of work-relatedness for health conditions related to Coronavirus/COVID-19, for all health care workers, first responders and all other workers who come into contact with the public;
6. Waive requirements for employees to produce doctor's notes in cases of illness (at the very least, consider other less onerous ways to substantiate absences due to illness);
7. Waive all fees for registration or other services at all health institutions including any planned COVID-19 assessment centres and existing community clinics, hospitals, and other facilities regardless of status;
8. Ensure that vital health services, including health agencies, remote health care services (e.g. telephone information services), assessment centres and hospitals, are properly resourced to deal with rising patient volumes;
9. Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to workers in high-risk and frontline service positions;
10. Ensure that all Indigenous communities have immediate access to clean water and practice the prevention measures advised by health professionals to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
11. Establish and adequately fund provincial Anti-Racism Councils and Directorates that provide advice and direction to governments to combat xenophobia. As COVID-19 continues to spread racialized groups, including but not limited to Chinese and Iranians, are disproportionately likely to face loss of income, and to suffer the effects of racism;
12. Instruct all provincially-regulated institutions to extend and relax payment requirements on financial responsibilities facing consumers and households, including student loans, rent, mortgage payments, utility bills;
13. Include labour, community, anti-poverty, and migrant worker advocacy groups included in all government planning of its COVID-19 response; and
14. Fully implement the recommendations of public health officials to protect vulnerable residents and workers in long-term care facilities by enforcing screening of staff, residents, and visitors in long-term care facilities. Ensure that long-term care homes increase staffing - including increasing hours for part-time and casual workers - so that workers are able to provide care safely and follow all precautions necessary to protect themselves and residents.

As the circumstances continue to change with the ongoing pandemic, we urge your governments to set partisanship aside and work with labour, advocacy organizations, and public health officials to implement the above recommendations immediately and to remain in constant contact with our union to flatten the curve of this pandemic.

Sincerely,



Gavin M'Garrigle
Western Regional Director



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Ontario Regional Director



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