

March 31, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Honourable Minister Christine Elliot
Ministry of Health
438 University Ave, 8th floor,
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Honourable Minister Monte McNaughton
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
14th Floor, 400 University Ave
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

Dear Ministers Elliot and McNaughton:

Re: COVID-19 and LiUNA, Local 3000

On behalf of the over 8,500 hard working women and men employed in the healthcare sector represented by LiUNA, Local 3000, I am writing to bring certain issues to your attention, so that your office can provide much needed guidance and assistance.

As you are aware, our members employed in hospitals, long term health care facilities, retirement homes and community homecare are on the front lines of this current health crisis. The work they do is essential. They are caring for our most vulnerable citizens and themselves are among our most vulnerable workers.

While we appreciate the government's commitment to provide \$50 million for long-term care homes and \$10 million to protect seniors in retirement homes, there is an urgent need for immediate action. We have set out below our key areas of concern for your consideration.

1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Safety Measures

Though we recognize the efforts of the Federal Government and the recent announcement of \$2 billion for PPE, it is imperative that we ensure that all frontline workers have access to essential PPE to protect the men and women who remain dedicated to keeping our loved ones and communities safe. Our members are advising us that there are not adequate supplies of PPE for their needs resulting in rationing or doing without. Common areas used by frontline staff,

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such as washroom facilities and lunchrooms are not being cleaned frequently. This endangers frontline workers and the people under their care.

2. Funding for Healthcare Workers

Although employers in the private sector can provide financial incentives to retain existing healthcare workers and attract new workers, no such incentives are available to workers in the healthcare sector who are subject to the current provincial wage restrictions and funding models. We urge the government to lift these restrictions, at least temporarily, to allow workers to be paid appropriately for the added risk and responsibility they face in meeting the urgent health care needs arising from this crisis.

Further, many of our members are employed at multiple facilities. We are very concerned that when members are required to limit their employment to one facility, it will create labour shortages at some locations. It will also impose economic hardship on healthcare workers who are required to give up employment at other locations.

To remedy this situation, we recommend the following:

- Income guarantees including wages and benefits for workers who must give up employment at multiple location to work at a single location;
- Job security guarantees that require employers to reemploy workers who were required to give up employment in order to work at a single location, without loss of seniority and service; and
- Confirmation that employer actions which are unreasonable or contrary to our collective agreements may be grieved and adjudicated once the COVID-19 crisis is under control.

3. Increase Hiring and Training

There is a clear need to increase hiring and training to meet the enhanced demands in health care facilities to deal with the COVID-19 virus. This means providing funding and a direction to hire additional healthcare workers and other staff who support them, including cleaning, laundry and dietary personnel. “Upstaffing” is necessary to ensure a safe environment for our members and the individuals under their care.

We are also very concerned that the emergency measures passed will allow employers to engage unpaid, untrained volunteers to do the work of our members. While we recognize there are significant challenges in dealing with the COVID-19 virus, bringing untrained volunteers into contact with our most vulnerable populations is not the answer. Instead, resources need to be directed at ensuring that everyone working in this environment is trained, competent and compensated for the vital work they perform.

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Amid the rapid progression of Covid-19, we must make it our priority to work together to keep our frontline workers safe so they can continue to care for the sick, elderly and vulnerable in our communities without risking their own safety.

There is no time to waste. We must act now.

On behalf of all members of LiUNA Local 3000,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Waller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann Waller
Business Manager

cc: The Honourable Premier Doug Ford
Joseph S. Mancinelli, Vice President and Regional Manager Central and Eastern Canada