



COVID Watch

Might as well rename this column for now, because is there ANY other thing on our mind except this virus?? These are extraordinary times with no quick or easy answers for anything. But please do keep a list of all the cracks and gaps that are tripping your organization up in this unprecedented crisis, because that will be valuable on the other side of this for reminding us of all the issues we need to fix for next time.

BC has now declared a state of emergency and determined essential services (not the same as those during labour action). [Here's the list](#). Check "Vulnerable Population Service Providers" for details most relevant to our sector.

The "Better At Home" program [received \\$50 million this week](#) to bolster seniors' supports during the pandemic. We know many of you are anxiously awaiting answers on questions of funding, practices, safety equipment and so on. No answers yet, but watch for an e-blast after Monday's Roundtable-COVID weekly check-in.

Thank you for all the on-the-fly decisions and innovative actions you're doing to walk this tightrope between keeping staff and clients safe while maintaining vital services. I found [this post](#) from aid worker Imogen Wall helpful in grasping this anxious, uncertain state we're all in.

What you need to know...

Health authorities have now been given the power to order long-term care staff to work at only one site, but those with second jobs in community social services, hospitals and community health will not have to give up those jobs. The directive only affects staff who work at two or more long-term care facilities. [More details here](#) from the Hospital Employees Union on this new directive.

Now that we're certain to be in the thick of a global pandemic for a while, the economic impact is sinking in. Here is information you'll need on our governments' plans to help Canadians through this tough time, including your staff and clients.

First, there are new [supports for renters and landlords](#), including a ban on evictions in most cases. [This CBC story](#) details Ottawa's \$107-billion aid package to help Canadians; scroll down to the bottom of the story for a bulleted list of the measures.

[Two changes to BC's Employment Act](#) were enacted in response to COVID but will continue once the pandemic has eased. Workers can now take unpaid, job-protected leave from their work for reasons related to COVID, including to provide care for a sick child or other dependent.

BC has now caught up with the rest of Canada by permitting three days of unpaid, job-protected leave per year due to illness or injury.

Canada's charity sector is coalescing behind the concept of a multibillion-dollar "[emergency support fund](#)" to help the charitable sector survive the financial hardships caused by COVID. The Emergency Coalition of Canadian Charities and Imagine Canada have both written to government seeking the establishment of an \$8-10 billion fund to help charities get through the pandemic. Charities are having to cope with a surge in need, fundraisers having to be cancelled, and increased staffing costs in some cases due to sickness, quarantines and other pressures.

WorkSafeBC has now granted 90-day extensions on first aid certificates due to expire between March 1, 2020 and June 30, 2020. Find details here.

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Queries, questions, concerns, ideas:

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