$5mn allowance fund negotiated for health science professionals

April 25, 2020

Health science professionals on the front lines of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in British Columbia will be paid a daily allowance on top of straight time earnings retroactive to April 1, in an agreement reached by the Health Sciences Association (HSA) with the Ministry of Health.

The $5 million fund was negotiated by HSA on behalf of the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association.

“When we began to see the impact on our members working in health care, we approached the Ministry of Health for support and recognition of the critical contribution health science professionals make to providing care to patients in hospitals and long term care facilities,” HSA President Val Avery said.

“Our members are working tirelessly at jobs that have changed dramatically over the course of just a few weeks. They have additional stresses of worrying about their personal health and safety, access to personal protective equipment, not knowing where they may be redeployed to work, and rearranging their home lives to be available to meet the demand the pandemic places on the health care system. This allowance is recognition of their role in the pandemic,” HSPBA Chief Negotiator Jeanne Meyers said.

Health science professionals on the health care team eligible to apply for the allowance include but are not limited to:

- respiratory therapists making sure patients have all the interventions and supports they need to survive a serious respiratory illness
- laboratory technologists and medical imaging technologists performing diagnostic tests
- dietitians, speech language pathologists, and physiotherapists critical to recovery
- biomedical engineering technologist who are critical to the maintenance of life sustaining medical equipment
- social workers supporting patients and their families
- licensing and public health inspectors

The fund was created to supplement straight time earnings by $4 an hour for the month of April. It applies to health science professionals who work in direct patient care and who are not able to be physically distanced from patients at work, or who work with material or samples that may be infectious. The $5mn fund will be administered by the affected unions.

Details on how HSA members apply to the fund will follow next week.

The HSPBA collective agreement covers 20,000 health science professionals in five unions: HSA, CUPE, BCGEU, PEA, and HEU.

Topic:
Health Science Professionals