Last week, HSPBA announced a $5mn fund negotiated with the BC Ministry of Health to recognize the contributions of health science professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fund allows for a payment equivalent to $4 per straight time hour worked (maximum of $300 per pay period) for the month of April for frontline workers who are directly impacted by the response to Covid-19 in their work as health science professionals. Online applications will be available on the HSA website from Friday May 8 until midnight, Sunday May 24. Funds will be paid by electronic funds transfer.

In announcing the fund on April 25, HSPBA provided a sample list of professions that may be eligible for the fund. This list of professions is neither a conclusion that every health science professional in the listed professions meets the qualification criteria, nor does it assume that the many professions not specifically listed do not meet the criteria.

The criteria that apply to each and every health science professional, whether their profession was listed in the April 25 announcement or not, are as follows:

a) Health science professionals who work in direct patient or client care and who are not able to physically distance (6 feet/2 metres away) from patients or clients for 100% of their time worked.

- If you are not able to physically distance from patients or clients in your work setting, then you qualify.
- You do not qualify if you are always able to physically distance from patients or clients in your work setting.

b) Health science professionals who work with material or samples that may be infectious and where exposure to Novel Coronavirus may occur (i.e. laboratories)

- This is not about equipment, but biomaterial in most cases.

For many professions, even in some professions listed in the April 25 announcement, only a minority will meet the criteria.

Please scrutinize the criteria and your circumstances very carefully when determining if you are eligible.

When you apply, you will be required to submit pay stubs that cover the entirety of the eligibility period of April 1 to 30, 2020 inclusive. You will not be able to submit a complete application until you have all your pay stubs for the period. In many cases this will mean three pay stubs, and for most, the final pay stub will be May 8 at the earliest.

The online application system will be available May 8 to May 24, 2020. Only one application per member is permitted. DO NOT SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH PAY STUB PERIOD. PLEASE PROVIDE ALL
PAY STUBS IN A SINGLE APPLICATION.

HSPBA has received advice that the Pandemic Response Fund payment is taxable income, and a 2020 T4A will be issued by HSA at the end of the year for income tax filing purposes. This income is not included in calculation of EI or pensionable earnings. HSA will not deduct union dues from fund payments.

Any questions from HSA members about eligibility and the application process may be directed to the COVID19 Hotline at covid19hotline@hsabc.org or phone 1-604-549-5168.

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