

**April 3, 2020**

*Delivered by Email*

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario

Public Service Alliance of Canada  
Yukon Employees' Union  
Whitehorse, Yukon

To Our Union Partners,

I wanted to write to you in order to answer some questions you may be hearing from your members, but also to share more details about some of the measures the Yukon Hospital Corporation has taken in response to COVID-19. We acknowledge the pandemic has created uncertainty and anxiety in our communities, families and hospitals. Like you, our top priority is the health and safety of our people.

Many of the decisions we've recently made as an organization (such as temporarily suspending elective surgeries and some non-urgent services) were to protect our employees and other critical resources now – ahead of what could be a substantial increase in demand for hospital care in the coming weeks. As our team cares for others, we need your collaboration in ensuring we are successful in caring for them.

We are in daily communication with our teams – and we recognize we can always do more. These efforts continue to ramp up as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

- YHC has implemented 'incident command' to ensure we continue to provide acute hospital care and urgent ambulatory services – and are able to respond to the pandemic and communicate in an effective and timely manner.
- We provide daily situation reports to our leaders, physicians and partners (including PSAC and PIPSC) for distribution to their teams. We post daily status reports by the staff entrances at all facilities.
- We provide regular updates via email to our entire team about COVID-19 in the Yukon and our preparedness as well as information related to sick leave to how to access EFAP services. We also have a comprehensive FAQ document available to all employees that is updated regularly.

- We continue to encourage everyone to look to reliable sources of information (such as public health agencies) about COVID-19 and get answers to practical questions they may have.

We are working closely with our Yukon health system partners to account for our resources, as well as monitor and secure necessary supplies and equipment. We are working directly with medical experts to validate our personal protective equipment guidelines, and continuously provide education and communication about appropriate and safe PPE use. I want to emphasize that Yukon's hospitals remain 'low risk' environments (as there is no evidence of community spread of COVID-19 in the territory) and normal PPE protocols apply and will be enforced.

- We have conducted N95 mask 'fit testing' to most employees and physicians at all three facilities. We have secured additional expert resources to ensure we have fitted every employee who would need to use this type of mask.
- We have provided initial refresher education on donning/doffing of PPE –and this training will be provided on a go-forward and continuous basis to reinforce appropriate and safe use. This is required learning for employees.
- Safety precautions will also be shared with all employees, so they understand what the appropriate precautionary measures for their duties (such as physical distancing and hand hygiene) and why some of our people need to wear PPE and why others do not.
- Our expectation is that all employees fully comply with our PPE guidelines and standards, which have the support of Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health. Individual employees cannot deviate from these standards, as it puts themselves/others at risk.

We have also put in place (and are exploring) additional measures to ensure the health and safety of everyone in our hospitals.

- We have screeners at all public entrances to our hospitals to control and limit access to our facilities. No visitors are allowed (except in limited circumstances) and non-urgent services have been temporarily suspended. These measures help prevent spread of COVID-19 and protect our critical resources, including our people.
- We have (or will soon have) physical (plexi-glass) barriers at screening points and some key registration desks as an additional control to reinforce physical distancing.
- We also have some employees working remotely when practical to do so. Given the nature of our work in a hospital setting, working from home is not always possible. But when it can be done, we ask that employees and

managers set clear guidelines such as priority activities, hours of work and availability, check-in times with the team, rest periods, etc.

Lastly, we have developed new human resources policies, covering leave for self-isolation and illness due to COVID-19. We do want our employees to have time to isolate and/or recover without worrying about losing income.

- In general, we have extended every employee's ability to use sick leave for self-isolation in addition to illness related to COVID-19.
- In some circumstances, an employee whose travel started before the March 13, 2020 travel advisory was in place, and had to self-isolate on return to the Yukon, will receive regular paid time over the 14-day period. For travel that started on or after March 14, employees can access sick leave for self-isolation.
- For employees with insufficient leave credits, we will advance up to a maximum of 15 days that can be repaid through future sick leave accruals.
- We are also waiving the need for a sick note from a physician for absences during this period.

I encourage you to reach out to James Low, YHC's Director People Services & Culture, on regular basis with any additional questions or concerns you have. He will be able to bring these to the attention of our emergency response team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Bilsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" written in a smaller, more legible script than the last name "Bilsky".

Jason Bilsky, CEO  
Yukon Hospital Corporation.

cc/ Debi Daviau, President, PIPSC  
Mike Paré, President, PIPSC YHC Group  
Cara Ryan, Negotiator, PIPSC  
Steve Geick, President, YEU  
Leah Santo, President, YEU Local Y025  
Erna Post, Negotiator, PSAC