

TEMPORARY PANDEMIC PAY

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is pandemic pay and how much does an eligible employee receive?

The Government of Ontario introduced temporary pandemic pay in April to recognize the contributions of essential service workers and encourage essential staff to continue working during the pandemic.

Temporary pandemic pay is aimed at helping frontline staff who are experiencing severe challenges and are at heightened risk during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Government's goals of this temporary pandemic pay are to:

- Provide additional support and relief to frontline workers
- Encourage staff to continue working and attract prospective employees
- Help maintain safe staffing levels and the operation of critical frontline services

Eligible workers will receive temporary pandemic pay of \$4/hour on top of their regular wages. In addition, the government is providing monthly lump sum payments of \$250 for four months to eligible frontline workers who work over 100 hours per month. The pandemic pay will be effective for 16 weeks, from April 24, 2020 until August 13, 2020.

2. Am I eligible for pandemic pay?

The Government has been very explicit around the roles that are eligible for this temporary pay. Please review the **Eligibility Criteria and Roles** information for a list of those roles.

The following overarching guidelines apply:

- Only those staff in the roles identified by Government for Hospitals are eligible
- It excludes all staff working from home or providing virtual care. At times, clinicians may be working on-site but providing virtual patient care. In these cases, they would not be eligible for pandemic pay. Where staff are providing a combination of virtual work/in-person work, they will receive pandemic pay for the portion they work in-person only.
- It excludes all management positions.
- Where staff are not eligible in their regular position, but have been redeployed to an eligible position, they will be paid pandemic pay for shifts worked in an eligible position.

- Employees working in “charge” or “lead” positions that are not formal leaders will be eligible for pandemic pay.
- It does not apply to sick leave, vacation or any other authorized paid leaves and will be calculated separately and distinctly from any other pay premiums (such as overtime).

3. Why are some frontline workers not eligible for pandemic pay?

The Ministry of Health states they focused this initiative on frontline workers who regularly and consistently face the threat of exposure to COVID-19 in their work setting, and as such, not all frontline workers are eligible for pandemic pay according to their eligibility requirements.

Waypoint recognizes that there are many frontline workers who have not been captured by the initiative and we were part of advocacy efforts with the OHA and other partners to have all healthcare workers included.

We would like to be able to provide pandemic pay to all staff who are working to support our patients and community at this time, however, the province has said there is a limit to the amount of funding provided by the federal government and the Government of Ontario. As well hospitals have been mandated not to increase the scope of the pandemic pay to positions that are not listed on the Government of Ontario’s eligible list.

More specifically, in relation to other non-nursing front-line positions, when asked if hospital social workers and other related workers (addictions workers, mental health counsellors, regulated case managers etc.) can be included given these positions encompass our outpatient mental health programs which are not listed in the guidance document but appear to be included on the website, the Ministry responded as follows:

The eligible roles listed in the MHA schedule are only eligible to receive temporary pandemic pay if the role is carried out in an eligible workplace listed in the MHA schedule. Hospitals are not eligible workplaces in this schedule.

4. Does Waypoint have the ability to expand the scope of eligibility for pandemic pay?

There was an Emergency Order passed on May 29, 2020 that clearly prohibits all employers, including hospitals, from expanding eligibility for temporary pandemic pay. Consequently, funding provided by the government to employers for temporary pandemic pay must be disbursed in accordance with the government’s eligibility framework for temporary pandemic pay. Waypoint is not permitted to use government funds of any kind to provide pandemic pay of any kind to those who are not eligible.

5. Why are some administrative and clerical staff included but not others?

The Government of Ontario focused the pandemic pay to those administrative and clerical roles who they deemed to be critically important to the province’s response to

the pandemic and are at a heightened risk of exposure to COVID-19 because of their work directly with patients.

We recognize that many staff in these roles have been delivering critical services to support our patients and staff and we wish we could recognize those contributions with the Government's pandemic pay program. However, hospitals have been mandated not to increase the scope of the pandemic pay to positions that are not listed on the Government of Ontario's eligibility list.

6. What is meant by “client facing?”

Client facing clerical/reception/administrative workers are positions that have direct, in-person patient interaction onsite at the workplace as a regular and ongoing requirement of their position. Virtual care, telework or remote work hours would not be eligible for pandemic pay.

7. On the Government's pandemic pay website, it lists a lot of eligible roles under the health care section. Why is our list different?

The Government of Ontario's pandemic pay website does have a broad list of eligible roles under the healthcare category. The government created separate eligibility lists for each sector within healthcare (hospitals, long-term care, public health, home and community care, mental health and addictions, emergency medical services etc.) and each sector is required to adhere to those roles. Waypoint's eligible positions are part of the eligible roles for hospitals, which is how they categorize us.

8. If I am a part-time or a casual employee, am I eligible for pandemic pay?

Yes, part-time and casual employees are eligible for pandemic pay if they meet the appropriate eligibility criteria.

9. Are management positions eligible for pandemic pay?

No, as per the Government of Ontario directives, management positions are not eligible to receive pandemic pay.

10. If I am not eligible in my home position but was redeployed to an eligible position will I receive pandemic pay?

Yes, you will receive pandemic pay for the hours worked while performing the duties of an eligible position. This would include redeployment to direct care, client facing support roles on the clinical programs, or as screeners, in housekeeping and while working at the assessment centre.

11. If I am on count in a clinical program but my home position is not eligible will I receive pandemic pay?

You will receive pandemic pay if you are performing the duties of an eligible position. You are not eligible if you are working in your current role and it is not on the eligibility list.

12. How much will eligible employees receive?

There are two types of pandemic pay employees may be eligible for:

- A temporary top up of \$4.00 per hour worked on top of regular wages
- A monthly lump sum payment of \$250.00 for eligible employees who work at least 100 hours in a designated four-week period (April 24, 2020 to May 21, 2020; May 22, 2020 to June 18, 2020; June 19, 2020 to July 16, 2020; and July 17, 2020 to August 13, 2020 respectively).

Both the temporary top up and monthly lump sum payments will be effective for the 16-week period of April 24, 2020 to August 13, 2020.

13. How and when will eligible employees receive their payment?

We are currently working towards having eligible employees receive a lump sum payment on September 17, 2020.

14. What if I work at multiple eligible workplaces?

Eligible employees who work for multiple eligible workplaces will be required to provide an attestation of hours worked to their primary employer. The primary workplace is the organization an employee has worked the most hours within the specified dates.

Eligible employees who work at least 100 hours of eligible work per four-week period, may receive a \$250 lump sum. It can be over 100 hours worked with multiple eligible employers, but only one lump sum per four-week period is paid by the primary employer. Where the 100 hours are split across two or more employers, the employee must provide an attestation to the primary employer of the other hours worked.

If you have worked for multiple employers and you have identified Waypoint as your Primary Employer, it is your responsibility to provide the completed Attestation Form by August 31, 2020 to the payroll by email to payroll@waypointcentre.ca or in person to the Finance office.

15. How does pandemic pay impact my salary, pension and benefits?

The Government of Ontario shared that pandemic pay will not be considered part of an employee's base salary, benefits or pensionable earnings.

16. Will I be taxed on the \$4/hr premium and lump sum payment?

Yes, all regular statutory deductions will apply to both the \$4/hr premium, as well as the lump sum payment. This will include CPP, EI and Income Tax.

17. Will I receive pandemic pay if I am on vacation or any authorized paid leave?

Pandemic pay will **not** be provided for the time you were not in the workplace for any reason, including:

- vacation
- any authorized paid leave, including sick leave
- time and benefits awarded under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

The \$4/hr premium and \$250.00 lump sum payment only apply to the hours worked, including shifts worked on statutory holidays and overtime hours.

18. If I resigned or retired, am I still eligible to receive pandemic pay for the period I worked?

Yes. Staff who have since resigned or retired will still receive pandemic pay retroactively for eligible hours worked, subject to the terms of their employment contract or applicable collective agreement.

19. I am currently on leave. If I return before August 13, 2020 to an eligible role, will I receive pandemic pay?

When staff return from a leave during the eligible time period and meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive pandemic pay. Please speak to your manager who can work with Finance and HR to ensure you are on the list based on your eligible role.

20. If I receive an email that says I am not eligible, but then am redeployed to an eligible position before August 13th what happens?

You will be included in the temporary pandemic pay if you are redeployed to a role where you are performing the duties of an eligible position. You will receive an email to let you know you are eligible. If you do not receive an email, please contact your manager who will follow up with Finance and Human Resources.

21. Will pandemic pay continue after the 16 weeks?

No, the temporary pandemic pay will only be effective for 16 weeks, from April 24, 2020 until August 13, 2020.

