

Resolution

Agenda Number: 8.1

Date: Regional Council, December 10, 2020

Moved by Councillor Brown, Councillor Crombie and Councillor Thompson

Whereas the Region of Peel is currently in lockdown and, as of December 7, 2020, has an incidence rate of 202.9 cases per 100,000 population and a test positivity rate of 10.6 per cent, which are well above the threshold for the control or red level under the Provincial COVID-19 response framework;

And whereas, workplaces are a source of COVID-19 transmission in Peel and a Peel Public Health Surveillance identifies that among COVID-19 cases the most frequently reported occupation categories after health (8.9 per cent), are trades, transport and equipment operators (5.5 per cent), sales and service (3.9 per cent) and manufacturing and utilities (3.4 per cent);

And whereas, it is workers in precarious employment who are most likely to not have paid sick days, including low-income workers, essential workers, contract and agency workers, those who cannot work remotely, and many health-care workers;

And whereas, many of these workers simply cannot afford to take time off work;

And whereas, the federal government has established the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB) which provides support to eligible employed and self-employed individuals who are unable to work because they are sick with COVID-19 or may be sick with COVID-19, or need to self-isolate due to COVID-19, or have an underlying health condition that puts them at greater risk of getting COVID-19;

And whereas, the CRSB is only limited to \$450 (after taxes are withheld) for a one-week period and the employed or self-employed individual must apply again to receive a second week of benefits and that only a total of two weeks of benefits are available, which is a barrier for a worker who is sick and needs to isolate for a longer period of time;

And whereas, the Ontario government through Bill 186, *Employment Standards Amendment Act (Infectious Disease Emergencies), 2020*, created job protected infectious disease emergency leave so that an employee cannot be threatened, fired or penalized in any other way because the employee took or plans on taking an infectious disease emergency leave for COVID-19;

And whereas, on September 3, 2020, the Ontario government through Ontario Regulation 228/20 extended infectious disease emergency leave, which is set to end on January 2, 2021;

And whereas, the lack of paid sick days, financial/income supports, and sick leave protection are known barriers to compliance to COVID-19 control measures, including testing and self-isolation, due to the fear of income-loss and financial hardship;

Therefore be it resolved, that the Regional Chair write to the Prime Minister of Canada and Premier of Ontario, on behalf of Regional Council, to request that:

- the federal and provincial governments implement and fund the necessary policies and programs to provide adequate paid sick day benefits to ensure accessible and timely income/financial supports in order to remove barriers facing precariously employed Peel residents, which will allow them to get tested, self-isolate and follow necessary COVID-19 control measures without fear of income-loss and financial hardship;
- the provincial government extend infectious disease emergency leave beyond January 2, 2021 and do this expeditiously to give workers job protection and peace of mind;

And further, that a copy of this resolution be sent to all Peel-area MPs and MPPs for their awareness and active support;

And further, that a copy of this resolution be sent to Greater Toronto Hamilton Area municipalities.