



Joint statement by UNA, AUPE, CUPE, and HSAA issued on April 25, 2020

Alberta's health-care unions issue joint statement on rollout of single-site orders

EDMONTON - Yesterday (April 24), the Government of Alberta issued a Ministerial Order that lays out the process for limiting continuing-care staff to one facility and determining how employees who work multiple jobs will decide what site they stay at through the pandemic.

The four unions representing the majority of the unionized health-care staff in the province, including long-term care (LTC) and supportive living, issued the following joint statement in response to the plans:

Protecting resident care means protecting the staff who provide it, during the pandemic and after. HSAA, AUPE, CUPE and UNA have all pushed for this as guiding principle for Alberta's single-site order. If employees who are forced to work multiple jobs to make ends meet are to be limited to employment at one worksite, a process needs to be in place to:

- Protect them against financial loss
- Protect their employment
- Fill gaps in hours of care, so all residents get the support they deserve

The Ministerial Order issued today (April 24) takes steps to address these requirements.

- It works to retain the familiar faces residents see everyday by keeping staff at sites where they hold regular hours
- It automatically maintains employees' full-time positions.
- It maintains any benefits and pensions plans for affected employees as per their collective agreements.
- It establishes that all staff impacted by the single-site order will be given a leave of absence from their jobs, allowing them to return to their old positions when the pandemic ends.
- It stipulates that unions are to be consulted in the rollout of this order and will play an active, ongoing role in providing solutions for any issues that arise.

Overall, we're pleased the Order prioritizes the site-specific knowledge and resident relationships health-care staff build over time, and that it will strive to give affected members more consistent hours by holding employers responsible for making up for lost shifts and wages.

Our unions will use every opportunity to weigh in on the decisions that flow from the Order, so we can push for the best outcome for Alberta's frontline health-care workers and the continuing-care residents they support. Employers are obligated to consult us and include the unions in discussions, and we will make sure this happens.



Moving Forward

The terms of this mandate address our most immediate concerns – that workers don't take a financial hit from the single-site order and that at least, the current maximum health-care hours are maintained.

However, it's going to take more than stop gap measures to halt the spread of COVID-19. The crisis in Alberta's continuing care started well before the pandemic. The virus has only worsened it. Workers on the front lines consistently reported that low staffing levels were a long-standing problem, and that these conditions have directly contributed to the spread of COVID 19 across sites.

Our members will continue to advocate for the changes we know need to be made to fix this, including standardizing pay for all continuing-care workers to create the kind of fair and equal working conditions that retain dedicated and knowledgeable staff across sites.

Our members are committed to supporting Albertans and stepping up to fight during this pandemic. To do that we need a government that's committed to the public's health and wellbeing and always puts it above the profits of private care providers.

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