



March 21, 2020

Honourable Jason Copping

Minister of Labour and Immigration
Office of the Minister
107 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Re: COVID-19: Paramedic Quarantine and On-Call Hours

Dear: Honourable Copping,

As a representative organization for its members, the Alberta Paramedic Association's (the Association) mission is to enhance knowledge, skills and the health and wellness Paramedics. The Association is not a union, but rather an elected organization that provides a voice for Paramedics within their professional practice.

Amid this COVID-19 crisis, all front-line medical professionals are doing their best to provide service for Albertans. Paramedics are often the first medical professionals contacted during health emergencies. Currently, Paramedics are taking great risk to protect their personal wellbeing and their families to ensure health services are being maintained.

There have been many announcements by your government outlining the financial assistance that you are providing for Albertans during this time of crisis. Current messaging is aimed at those who either become exposed or contract symptoms of the COVID-19 virus with specific direction to quarantine themselves. Once exposed, it is reasonable for paramedics to quarantine themselves to limit exposure to others however they must enact or rely on any sick benefits.

The Association has spoken previously about those Paramedics who are working extended on call shifts commonly known as Core-Flex, where compensation is based on a framework of an hourly rate and on-call rate. While those particulars can be debated another day, there is a pressing financial issue to how sick benefits, Employment Insurance (EI) and/or Workers Compensation Board (WCB) are calculated for compensation within the Core-Flex model.

Compensation for the on-call hours varies slightly between employers, however this compensation averages to roughly \$6/hour. When Paramedics activate sick benefits, those hours designated as "on-call" are not compensated by sick benefits. Over the course of a 14-day quarantine, a reduction of \$6.00/hour for an "on-call" period of 12-14 hours per day becomes a significant portion of their wage. To be clear, this on-call value is also not recognized by Employment Insurance (EI) or the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) benefits due to current legislation.

The Alberta Paramedic Association asks the Minister of Labor for a directive that the "on-call" portion be included in all employee sick benefits and/or the Government provide a special relief funding package for those paramedics working the Core-Flex model in order to cover the deficiency within their benefits. Furthermore, this should be included in the assessment for EI and WCB compensation. We don't believe



this to be an unreasonable request for those Paramedics who are placing their own wellbeing at risk to serve Albertans.

While the Association's primary function is for its members, we also feel the need to contribute in a meaningful way to the Government of Alberta. Paramedics skillsets can contribute greatly in this time of need. Thank you for your time in the midst of this Crisis and I look forward to discussing these matters with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Myshrall".

Dusty Myshrall, ACP, Flight Paramedic
President

Alberta Paramedic Association



cc Honourable Tyler Shandro,
Minister of Health