

Ontario's Temporary Pandemic Pay Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions for Staff

Background

Information about the Ontario government's temporary pandemic pay initiative is available as follows:

- [COVID-19 Temporary Pandemic Pay webpage](#) – provides background about the program (Published May 6, 2020; Updated June 29, 2020)
- [Eligible workplaces and workers for pandemic pay](#) (Published May 29, 2020; Updated June 23, 2020)

Below please find additional questions and answers regarding implementation of the government's initiative at Hamilton Health Sciences. This document will be updated with additional information as this initiative moves forward.

Please thoroughly read this FAQ and should you have a question that is not answered please complete the [Temporary Pandemic Pay Inquiry Form](#).

Eligibility

Who will receive temporary pandemic pay?

Eligible workplaces and roles have been determined by the Ontario government. A list of eligible workplaces and eligible roles may be found [here](#).

Employees must be both working in an eligible role and in an eligible workplace providing in-person publicly-funded services to be eligible for pandemic pay.

Based on this information, and additional details provided by the Ministry, the list of eligible roles at HHS, including important eligibility disclaimers, can be found [here](#).

Does working from home disqualify an otherwise eligible employee from receiving pandemic pay?

Any virtual care, telework or remote work (working from home) would be ineligible for pandemic pay as these are neither direct, in-person patient interaction, nor would they be occurring onsite at the eligible employer. More information is available [here](#).

Are administrative roles (such as Business Clerk, Ward Clerk, Clerk Typist, Receptionist, Secretary, etc.) eligible for temporary pandemic pay?

An employee who works in an eligible administrative role must also have direct, in-person patient interaction onsite at the workplace to be considered eligible.

The Government website indicates that Mental Health and Addictions workers are eligible for pandemic pay. Are mental health and addictions workers in the hospital sector eligible for temporary pandemic pay?

The government website is a public resource which provides overarching eligibility framework for all eligible workplaces within the health sector (hospitals, mental health and home & community care settings).

The Ministry has confirmed that mental health and addictions eligibility is specific to community mental health providers only. Therefore, Hospitals are not eligible workplaces for mental health and addictions workers.

Are employees on a leave of absence eligible for temporary pandemic pay?

Eligible employees who are on a leave of absence and who have worked hours during the applicable 16 week timeframe will receive temporary pandemic pay at the same time as active employees.

If an employee has been redeployed to another role within the hospital during the 16 week timeframe, are they eligible for the temporary pandemic pay?

Eligibility for temporary pandemic pay has been determined based on an employee's incumbent / home position.

If a non-management employee was redeployed to an eligible role during the 16 week timeframe but did not receive temporary pandemic pay for time worked in the eligible redeployed role, the employee must complete and submit the [Temporary Pandemic Pay Inquiry Form](#) to Human Resources outlining their question or concern.

Any non-management employee who was redeployed to an eligible Screener role, and coded to the applicable screening department, during the 16 week timeframe will receive temporary pandemic pay for the hours worked in the eligible Screener role.

Are former HHS employees, who worked hours in an eligible role during the applicable 16 week timeframe, eligible for the temporary pandemic pay?

Yes, former employees who worked hours in an eligible role during the applicable 16 week timeframe are eligible to receive temporary pandemic pay. Additional details regarding this process and the applicable payment date will be communicated shortly.

Not all healthcare workers are eligible for pandemic pay. What is the reasoning for this and what has HHS done to advocate on behalf of those roles that are not eligible?

The government has provided very specific direction on eligible roles. HHS has worked with partners to ask government to examine options and expand the scope of eligible roles: [open letter to government](#) and [Op-Ed Letter in The Hamilton Spectator](#)

HHS values the contributions of all employees and believe they should be recognized. This is acknowledged by the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) and every peer hospital in our region, as well as those throughout Ontario.

Is HHS considering providing a similar COVID-19 related payment to those roles which are not eligible under the government’s temporary pandemic pay initiative?

The Emergency Order passed on May 29, 2020 prohibits all employers, among other entities, from expanding eligibility for temporary pandemic pay.

Therefore, funding provided by the government to employers for temporary pandemic pay must be paid in accordance with the government’s eligibility framework for temporary pandemic pay.

Employers will not be permitted to use Ontario government funds of any kind for the purpose of making other forms of COVID-19-related payments to employees who are otherwise ineligible for the government’s own program for temporary pandemic pay.

Payment Types: Hourly & Lump Sum

What type of payments are included in the temporary pandemic pay and what timeframe do the payments represent?

There are two kinds of temporary pandemic pay that employees may be eligible for:

- 1) Hourly Pandemic Pay;
- 2) Monthly Lump Sum Pandemic Payment(s)

Hourly Pandemic Pay:

Eligible employees will receive \$4 per hour worked.

Hours worked between April 24, 2020 up to and including August 13, 2020 (16 week period) will be eligible for the hourly pandemic pay.

Monthly Lump Sum Pandemic Payment(s):

Eligible employees who work at least 100 hours in a designated 4-week period will also be eligible to receive an additional lump sum payment of \$250 for that period.

The designated 4-week periods (total of 16 weeks) are:

- April 24, 2020 to May 21, 2020
- May 22, 2020 to June 18, 2020
- June 19, 2020 to July 16, 2020
- July 17, 2020 to August 13, 2020

How will the monthly lump sum pandemic payment(s) be calculated for employees who work at multiple eligible employers? What documentation do eligible employees need to provide to Human Resources to support their monthly lump sum payment(s)?

1) Employees with At Least 100 Hours Worked at HHS:

Eligible employees who have worked at least 100 hours in the designated 4-week periods at Hamilton Health Sciences (regardless if they work for multiple eligible employers or not) will have their monthly lump sum pandemic payment(s) automatically processed on September 15, 2020. No supporting documentation is required from employees.

2) Employees with At Least 100 Hours Worked Across Multiple Employers:

Eligible employees who work at multiple eligible employers and who have worked at least 100 hours across their employers in each of the designated 4-week periods will receive the monthly lump sum pandemic payment(s) from their primary employer. The 'primary employer' is defined as the employer where the employee worked the most hours in the designated four-week period(s).

A) Multiple Employers (HHS Primary Employer):

For employees whose primary employer is Hamilton Health Sciences, documentation must be submitted to Human Resources to support the monthly lump sum pandemic payment(s).

Please complete the [HHS Lump Sum Attestation Form](#) and submit to myHR@hhsc.ca. Please refer to the [Lump Sum Attestation Process Guide](#) for further details on how to complete this form.

B) Multiple Employers (HHS Not Primary Employer):

For employees whose primary employer is not Hamilton Health Sciences, please contact your primary employer to determine the documentation they require in order to support the payment(s) at their workplace.

Employees are eligible for a maximum of one pandemic lump sum payment, regardless of if they work for multiple eligible employers, for each designated four-week period.

Timing of Payments

When will the temporary pandemic pay be paid to eligible HHS employees?

Payment timelines are as follows:

1) Hourly Pandemic Pay:

- A portion of the hourly pandemic pay will be **processed on August 11, 2020**. This payment will represent the period April 24, 2020 to July 15, 2020;
- The remaining hourly pandemic pay will be **processed on September 1, 2020**. This payment will represent the period July 16, 2020 to August 13, 2020

2) Monthly Lump Sum Pandemic Payment(s):

- Eligible employees with at least 100 hours worked at HHS:
 - The payment will be processed on **September 15, 2020**. This payment will represent the full 16 week timeframe (April 24, 2020 to August 13, 2020)
- Eligible employees with at least 100 hours worked across multiple employers with HHS as the primary employer):
 - The payment will be processed in **October**. This payment will represent the full 16 week timeframe (April 24, 2020 to August 13, 2020). Additional details regarding the payment date will be communicated shortly.

How will employees receive the temporary pandemic pay?

Temporary pandemic pay will be provided to eligible employees on **separate off-cycle pay deposits** (separate from the normal bi-weekly pay deposits). Depending on your banking institution, it may take 1 to 3 days for the money to be deposited into your account.

How many HHS pay periods does the 16 week pandemic pay timeframe (April 24, 2020 to August 13, 2020) cover for eligible employees?

The 16 week time frame covers 7 full pay periods and 2 partial pay periods. Eligibility for pandemic pay during the 16 week timeframe is dependent upon employees meeting the eligibility criteria as noted above.

HHS Pay Period Dates		Number of Days Eligible for Pandemic Pay Within Pay Period	Full or Partial Pay Period of Pandemic Pay
Start	End		
23-April-20	6-May-20	13 days	Partial
7-May-20	20-May-20	14 days	Full
21-May-20	3-June-20	14 days	Full
4-June-20	17-June-20	14 days	Full
18-June-20	1-July-20	14 days	Full
2-July-20	15-July-20	14 days	Full
16-July-20	29-July-20	14 days	Full
30-July-20	12-Aug-20	14 days	Full
13-Aug-20	26-Aug-20	1 day	Partial

The government announced the temporary pandemic pay initiative in April. Why is HHS planning to pay eligible employees starting in August?

The temporary pandemic pay initiative is the largest of its kind in the country and is unprecedented in the province's history.

Since the government launched its [COVID-19 Temporary Pandemic Pay webpage](#) (updated most recently on June 29th), HHS has worked with applicable government Ministries to validate eligibility guidelines and other details in support of our implementation. During this time, HHS also continued to advocate for those employees excluded from the pandemic pay initiative ([open letter to government](#) and [Op-Ed Letter in The Hamilton Spectator](#)).

HHS received the first installment of pandemic pay funding on July 8th, 2020, and has continued to seek clarification on several issues over past weeks.

We understand that peer hospitals in our region and across Ontario are providing the temporary pandemic pay to their eligible employees along roughly similar timelines.

Pandemic Pay Inclusions and Deductions

Which hours are included in calculating temporary pandemic pay?

All **worked** hours by an eligible employee during the applicable 16 week timeframe will be used to calculate temporary pandemic pay.

For eligible employees who have worked overtime hours (compensated at 1.5x (time and one half)) during the 16 week timeframe, will the hourly pandemic pay also be paid at 1.5x?

Hourly pandemic pay for overtime hours worked, according to the employee's applicable collective agreement / policy language, during the temporary pandemic pay period will be paid at the rate of overtime. For example, employees that work overtime and are paid at the rate of 1.5x will be paid \$6 of hourly pandemic pay per overtime hour worked (\$4/hour pandemic pay x 1.5 overtime premium = \$6 of pandemic pay per overtime hour worked).

Is the temporary pandemic pay included for purposes of calculating an eligible employee's maternity / parental sub top up benefits?

No. Temporary pandemic pay is not included in sub top up calculations.

If an eligible employee receives a record of employment which covers all or part of the 16 week timeframe, will the record of employment be revised to reflect the temporary pandemic pay?

Yes. An amended Record of Employment (ROE) will be submitted for employees receiving additional earnings for all or part of the 16 week timeframe covered in the original ROE. The amended ROE will be issued once the full pandemic pay amount owing has been paid.

What employee and employer deductions will be taken from temporary pandemic pay payments?

Temporary pandemic pay is subject to the following statutory deductions:

Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Employment Insurance (EI), Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) premiums and Employer Health Tax (EHT) and income tax.

Temporary pandemic pay is also subject to Family Support and Garnishment deductions.

Benefit premiums (Life (basic and optional), LTD, STD, AD&D, Extended Health, Dental, Semi-Private and Travel), HOOPP deductions and Union dues will not be deducted from temporary pandemic pay.

More information is available [here](#).

If an employee has elected to have additional tax taken off HHS wages via a Personal Tax Credit Return (TD1 form), will this also be deducted from the temporary pandemic pay?

Yes. If an employee elected to have additional tax taken off their HHS wages via a TD1 form they will also have the additional tax deducted from their temporary pandemic payments.

If an employee would like to change or stop their additional tax deduction, they must complete the [2020 Personal Tax Credit Return \(TD1 Form\)](#) and submit to Human Resources.

Additional Questions

Who should employees contact if they have a question following the payment of their temporary pandemic pay?

Employees will be required to complete and submit the [Temporary Pandemic Pay Inquiry Form](#) to Human Resources outlining their question or concern. The completed form will assist Human Resources in responding to questions / concerns in a timely manner.

This FAQ will be updated as this initiative moves forward.

Staff may submit questions to: myHR@hpsc.ca.