

## WEEKLY BRIEFING

April 17 2020



Weekly Pathway Group Newsletter for Friday April 17, 2020

**Pathway Group has created a round-up of news releases and articles of interest to keep you informed of the rapidly-changing federal and provincial landscape in the face of COVID-19. We will send this digest every Friday afternoon. For a complete and up-to-date look at all federal and provincial supports, visit our [COVID-19 Resource Hub](#).**



### News Releases

#### Monday April 13, 2020



##### Ontario COVID-19 cases pass 7,000

As of last weekend, there are 7,049 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ontario, an increase of 401 from the previous day. Of those, 738 people are in hospital, with 261 of them in intensive care and 196 on ventilators. To date, 274 people have died. This news came in the wake of Ontario's chief medical officer of health, Dr. David Williams, saying on Saturday that Ontario's current level of cases in intensive-care beds is encouraging — both because it's growing slowly and, more notably, because the level of ICU demand has not doubled, as the province's modelling suggested it might. However, Williams also noted that more travellers are still arriving in Ontario from overseas. "We are certainly bending the curve," he said. "Whether we've flattened it is another question."

##### Province extends emergency orders until April 23

The Ontario government has extended the orders made under the state of emergency until April 23, including closures of provincial parks and non-essential workplaces, and the prohibitions on price-gouging. The government is also temporarily allowing hospitals to increase capacity by using beds or other facilities in long-term-care homes.

##### Emergency Wage Subsidy Program to Take a Month to be Rolled Out

The House of Commons may have unanimously approved the wage-subsidy legislation, however, Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough said that it may take two to four weeks before the \$73-billion wage subsidy program is rolled out. The Senate has also set up two committees to keep tabs on the government's response to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

#### Tuesday April 14, 2020



##### ICYMI: Advanced Manufacturing Supercluster Launches Funding Program to Help Scale Response to COVID-19

The federal government has made available \$50 million to support members of the Next Generation Manufacturing Supercluster (NGen) to produce critically needed technologies, equipment, and medical products to aid in the fight against COVID-19. The program will fund projects that involve the rapid production launch of products in short supply, including virus screening test kits, gloves, gowns, masks, and other personal protective equipment, hospital equipment such as ventilators and peripherals, as well as cleaning and sterilization chemicals and equipment. When a manufacturer becomes a member of the NGen database, then they are able to participate in Supercluster projects, find partners and customers, and access NGen services. For more information about the NGen COVID-19 funding initiative, please visit [www.ngen.ca/covid19-response](http://www.ngen.ca/covid19-response)

##### Government of Canada updates mandatory requirements for travellers entering Canada

On Tuesday, the Government of Canada announced new mandatory quarantine rules for returning Canadian travellers. As of Wednesday, all people returning to Canada will have to have an acceptable 14-day self-quarantine plan, including access to food and medication, or will have check in to a hotel or other designated site. People arriving in Canada will also be forbidden to live with vulnerable individuals, such as anyone older than 65 or with pre-existing health conditions. Masks will be given to all incoming travellers. Ignoring instructions provided upon entering Canada is an offence under the Quarantine Act, with penalties of up to six months in prison, a fine of \$750,000, or both. Further, anyone who causes a risk of death or serious harm to another person can be fined up to \$1 million and imprisoned for up to three years. Additionally, the government announced it is giving police the flexibility to issue tickets to people who do not comply with these orders. Offences could result in tickets with fines ranging from \$275 to \$1,000, depending on the seriousness of the conduct.

The Canada Border Services Agency also announced the temporary reduction of service hours at certain low-traffic ports of entry (POE) along the Canada-United States land border. These COVID-19 related measures are temporary and went into effect as of April 15, 2020 at 11:59 pm EDT. They will remain in effect until further notice.

##### Government of Canada Launches Mental Health Portal to Support Canadians During COVID-19

As COVID-19 continues to impact the lives of Canadians, the federal government has launched an online portal and app, Wellness Together, dedicated to mental health and wellness that will connect people with peer support workers, social workers, psychologists and other professionals for confidential chat sessions or phone calls. It's also a place to find credible information about how to address mental health and substance use issues. Users will be able to access different levels of support depending on their needs.

#### Wednesday April 15, 2020



##### Prime Minister announced expanded access to Canada Emergency Response Benefit and support for essential workers

P.M. Justin Trudeau announced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) has been expanded to reach more people by changing the eligibility rules to:

- Allow people to earn up to \$1,000 per month while collecting the CERB.
- Extend the CERB to seasonal workers who have exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to undertake their usual seasonal work as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Extend the CERB to workers who recently exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to find a job or return to work because of COVID-19.

##### Small businesses ask for rent relief as pandemic closures continue

As non-essential businesses across the country close their doors during the COVID-19 pandemic, some long-standing operations won't be able to reopen when things get better. A survey of 10,969 Canadian small businesses from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), released Wednesday, indicates about 22% of small businesses have had their revenue drop to \$0 during the pandemic, while only half are confident their business will survive to the end of May. The CFIB is asking provinces to help small businesses with their rent with grants of up to \$5,000, as well as a 25 per cent reduction in property taxes.

#### Thursday April 16, 2020



##### Federal Help Coming for Small Businesses

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced expanded business loan eligibility, three-months' rent assistance for small businesses, and said Ottawa is working on wage top-ups for essential workers. The PM said his government will be expanding the emergency loan program to allow for more businesses to be eligible. Businesses who spent more than \$20,000 and \$1.5 million on payroll in 2019 will be eligible to receive a loan through the Canada Emergency Business Account. Details regarding the proposed wage top-up for essential workers, a shared federal-provincial program, needs to first be worked out in collaboration with the premiers. The measure aims to boost the pay for people who make less than \$2,500 a month working essential jobs.

Trudeau also announced a new Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program, which he said will help small businesses pay their rent for April, May and June.

#### Friday April 17, 2020



##### Feds unveil targeted COVID-19 help for energy, arts and sports sectors

On Friday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a new range of targeted financial measures to help the energy, arts, culture, and sports sectors particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Energy Sector spending will include: \$1.7 billion to clean up orphan and inactive wells in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and B.C. which the Liberals say will maintain 5,200 jobs in Alberta alone; Establishing a \$750 million Emission Reduction Fund to create and maintain 10,000 jobs; and expanding credit support for at-risk medium-sized energy companies.

Rural, Arts, Culture and Sports spending will include: \$962 million to regional development agencies to help small businesses in rural areas access funds; \$270 million to support innovators and other early stage development firms that don't qualify for the wage subsidy; \$500 million to Heritage Canada to aid workers in the arts, culture, and sports sectors.

**Stay tuned to the Pathway Group Resource Hub for further details on accessing these supports**

##### Talks continue on reconvening House of Commons

Negotiations continued Friday over resumption of the House of Commons, which is scheduled to reconvene Monday. The Liberals propose weekly in-person meetings of the House until there is a technical means of holding virtual sittings, but the Conservatives say several meetings a week are needed to hold the government to account.

##### Senate Adjourns until June 2

The Senate announced April 17 that it is extending its current adjournment period until Tuesday, June 2. The Senate will be recalled earlier if required to deal with government legislation. During the adjournment period, three committees are authorized continue their work and to undertake their proceedings by videoconference or teleconference, including those with a mandate to examine and report on measures related to COVID-19.

