

WEEKLY BRIEFING

April 24 2020



Weekly Pathway Group Newsletter for Friday April 24, 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 20, 2020



Chambers Seek Coordinated Approach On Essential Services

Business operations are still hampered by differences between provinces on approaches to essential services. Given that it is likely to business restrictions will be in place for some time, it is critical to have alignment within Canada.

Canada – U.S. Land Border Restrictions Extended

On Saturday, April 18, it was announced that restrictions on travel across the land border between Canada and the U.S. would be extended until May 20. The current restrictions remain in place.

COVID-19 community spread 'appears to have peaked' in Ontario

The peak of community spread of the novel coronavirus in Ontario seems to have been less severe than anticipated, but the public must "stay the course" to ensure a best-case scenario remains achievable in the weeks ahead, public health officials say. The total number of cases for the span of this wave of the outbreak is "now likely less than 20,000" which is "substantially lower" than the worst-case scenario of 300,000 and expected-case scenario of 80,000 included in Ontario's previous modelling update on April 3.

Canada's Leading Businesses Launch WellCan™ to support Canadians' mental health during COVID-19

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Morneau Shepell and 20 of Canada's leading business organizations to launch WellCan™, a free collection of digital resources to support the mental health of all Canadians during COVID-19. Through the growing collaboration of organizations, WellCan™ addresses mental health challenges brought on by COVID-19 through an extensive database of information and tools.

Liberals, Bloc, NDP, Greens approve once-a-week sittings in House of Commons

A government motion calling for once-a-week in-person sittings, to be supplemented eventually by virtual sittings, was passed Monday by a vote of 22-15. The motion included the one in-person sitting a week, and also the creation of a special all-party COVID-19 committee that could meet more frequently. The motion was proposed after the Conservatives refused during a week of negotiations to give unanimous consent to the government's proposal, triggering the return of the House of Commons with a small contingent of MPs on Monday.

Tuesday April 21, 2020



Premier Ford says Ontario preparing for 'gradual' economic reopening as modelling shows pandemic peak likely reached

Premier Doug Ford says Ontario is preparing for the "gradual" reopening of the economy as new modelling shows the province has likely reached its peak in the COVID-19 pandemic, even as the situation in long-term care homes continues to worsen.

Southwestern Ontario Development Fund Now Open for Applications!

The Southwestern Ontario Development Fund provides support for projects and investments to businesses, municipalities, and not-for-profit organizations for economic development in southwestern Ontario. The deadline to submit an application is May 29, 2020 – click here for detailed program information and of course, please let us know if you need any help navigating this program.

Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy – OPEN TO APPLICATIONS ON MONDAY

Businesses, non-profits and charities affected by COVID-19 can begin applying for the 75 per cent wage subsidy on Monday, April 27. The subsidy covers up to \$847 a week per employee. This wage subsidy will enable you to re-hire workers previously laid off as a result of COVID-19, help prevent further job losses, and better position resume normal operations following the crisis. [Click here for detailed program information](#) and please let us know if you need any help navigating this program.

Trudeau announces \$350M support fund for community groups helping vulnerable people

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced \$350 million in emergency funds for community groups and national charities that help seniors, the homeless and others made more vulnerable by the pandemic. The funds will support community groups through national organizations such as the United Way Canada, the Canadian Red Cross, and the Community Foundations of Canada.

Ontario Providing Additional Relief to the Province's Most Vulnerable

The Ontario government announced it is investing \$11 million for vulnerable citizens such as seniors and people with disabilities. The money will help deliver meals, medicine, and other essentials to those in need, and include doubling the Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) payments. The provincial government said it is working with the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) to launch a new Ontario Community Support Program to expand existing "meals on wheels" services to reach vulnerable citizens. The province also announced it is investing \$40 million in the "Residential Relief Fund" which will assist developmental services, child welfare, victims shelters, and organizations delivering social services to First Nations.

Wednesday April 22, 2020



City of Toronto launches BusinessTO Support Centre

Mayor John Tory announced that the City of Toronto has launched the [BusinessTO Support Centre](#) to provide virtual one-on-one support to Toronto businesses. To schedule a conversation with a business advisor by video or phone, [sign up here](#) and a business advisor will be in contact within 24 hours.

Re-Opening of Ontario's Economy?

After previously suggesting some relaxation by Victoria Day, Ontario Premier Doug Ford said during a press conference that that the re-opening of the province's economy by late May is "absolutely not going to happen."

Construction stakeholders and bureaucrats met to discuss issues arising from COVID-19

On April 14, senior representatives from the several Ontario government Ministries alongside the Premier's offices conferred with executives from various contractor associations, trade unions and other bodies to discuss federal support programs, the essential services list, building code and site inspections, contract language and liability and insurance issues.

Environmentalists slam Ontario for suspending oversight regulation amid pandemic

Environmental groups are raising concerns after the Ontario government changed its rules during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow it to approve some projects without public consultation. Earlier this month, the province posted a bulletin on its website saying it was temporarily changing a regulation to exempt proposals from part of the oversight process required under the Environmental Bill of Rights.

Thursday April 23, 2020



Ontario Extends Emergency Orders to Help Stop the Spread of COVID-19

Ontario is extending all emergency orders put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19 until May 6, 2020.

Feds Announce \$1.1B to Fund COVID-19 Vaccine Development

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the federal government will spend more than \$1 billion to help develop, test and manufacture a COVID-19 vaccine, as well as to determine how widely the virus has spread through Canada. The cash announced today is on top of \$275 million in research funding the Liberals announced in March at the outset of the pandemic.

Feds Establish COVID-19 Immunity Task Force

The Federal Government has announced it will be creating a COVID-19 Immunity Task Force of public health experts, that includes Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, and Dr. David Naylor, who has advised Liberal and Conservative governments on health and science issues. The task force will be asked to oversee country-wide blood test surveys to get a better handle on potential immunity and vulnerabilities in Canada.

Ontario Delivers Action Plan to Increase Protection for Vulnerable People and Those Who Care for Them

The provincial government announced it is delivering a [new Action Plan for Vulnerable People](#) to better protect vulnerable populations during the outbreak of COVID-19. This plan builds on the government's previous actions to protect people living in high-risk settings, including homes serving those with developmental disabilities, shelters for survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking, children's residential settings, and those residential settings supporting vulnerable Indigenous individuals and families both on and off reserve.

Friday April 24, 2020



Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Announced for Small Businesses

The federal government has reached an agreement in principle with all provinces and territories to implement the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) for small businesses. This program will lower rent by 75 per cent for small businesses that have been affected by COVID-19. Questions? Can we help you navigate? Contact us.

Ontario Provides Urgent Relief for Small Businesses and Landlords

The Ontario Government is committing \$241 million to partner with the federal government and deliver more than \$900 million in urgent relief to small businesses and their landlords through a new program, the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (OCECRA). Further program details available online here. Questions? Can we help you navigate? Contact us.

Governments Invest \$2.5 Million to Grow Agri-food e-Business During COVID-19

The Federal and Ontario Governments have launched this initiative to help food producers, farmers markets, retailers, garden centres, greenhouses, nurseries, and agriculture associations develop online business, providing consumers with greater access to a wide variety of food and agriculture products. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will immediately accept applications and expedite the approval process to help businesses and organizations develop, expand and enhance their current online presence. Questions? Need help with an application? Contact us.

