



## **Family/Advocate Virtual Meeting**

### **Pandemic Updates**

**April 27-29, 2020**

1. Thank you for your patience and tremendous support during this time. We recognize that these are uncertain times and separating loved ones from family members is tremendously challenging for all involved. Great news is that we have had 2 people supported tested and 19 staff and all negative. This speaks to the great work our staff are doing to keep people safe.
2. Kathy is involved in virtual weekly meetings with our sister agencies locally as well as our Ministry Program Supervisors. We are supporting each other, sharing best practices and resources when we can. Kathy receives regular updates from the Provincial Network and OASIS regarding their advocacy for the Developmental Services sector as a whole which has resulted in a number of positive responses from government. Kathy also meets virtually with the Senior Leadership team and a separate meeting with the Program Supervisors of each of our homes. Kathy reports to the PCL Board of Directors weekly in the form of a written report providing updates on the sector and updates from the homes.
3. First of all, everyone seems to be doing really well despite the circumstances. We are establishing new routines and staff have been very creative in coming up with activities. Our staff teams are outstanding and we couldn't be more proud of the work they are doing.
4. From a HR perspective there have been many changes: We have changed staff schedules to longer shifts as much as possible to reduce the number of staff coming in and out of the homes. We have eliminated cross-sharing of staff from one home to the other and those employees working in other sectors or agencies have either selected PCL or the other employer while the State of Emergency continues. We have some back up staff in the event there is an outbreak and staff either cannot or do not choose to work. We have acquired the use of a local hotel in the event of an outbreak and staff

do not want to return home between shifts. We will cover the cost of their food and lodging during this time should it be necessary.

5. Personal Protective Equipment: PCL currently has about 1000 surgical masks on hand, 600 homemade masks which employees may choose to wear, it is presently optional. We have 100 disposable gowns with more on order and working on 400 homemade gowns currently being sewn. A huge thank you to the many volunteers who have and continue to make these gowns (all the masks are done). We also had a donation of 90 face shields made by InkShield. Public Health has informed us that it is not necessary for employees to wear mask for a variety of reasons (tend to touch your face more often, germs attach to fabric, ensure removal is correct to avoid spread of germs etc). **Update: As of May 1, 2020, all staff are required to wear one face mask per shift as per the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.**
6. Waterloo Region Public Health is working closely with us regarding testing and best practice. The MOH provided guidelines for us to use within our homes and we have enshrined those guidelines into policy. All staff have had to read all policies, sign off on them and watch MOH videos on proper use of PPE. One of those policies includes active screening where employees self-assess for symptoms prior to entry into the home. This screening now includes temperature taking pre and post shift. All of those we support are now having their temperature checked twice daily. If staff show any symptoms of illness we are getting them tested immediately. If any person we support shows symptoms we will isolate immediately until test results return negative and staff use full PPE. We have developed personalized isolation scenarios for all of the folks we support, re bathroom usage etc. All meals will be in the persons room and we have disposable plates, utensils etc available for this purpose. If there is a positive case of either staff or person supported, all staff and people living in the home will be tested with the PH mobile testing unit. One local agency had a positive case of a medically fragile person. No one else got sick, either staff or resident, which demonstrates that it is possible to contain the virus and keep everyone safe and healthy. The affected person has since made a full recovery. The two individuals we tested were both isolated immediately until we received negative results back and Public Health (PH) told us we did everything right!

The PH unit will begin screening of all people we support and staff in the coming weeks.

7. As much as possible we are keeping people we support separated and not allowing shared food containers (eg salt/pepper) to be used. Dining is separated when possible or meals in shifts to avoid contact. Obviously this is not always possible in some settings but we are doing our best to keep folks separated.
8. People are only leaving the house for urgent appointments or to manage behaviours. Using the yard outside and going for walks is encouraged where people can keep proper physical distancing.
9. Cleaning: our homes are getting cleaned like never before. Twice or more daily sanitizing of anything touched in the home. Kitchen can be used by only one person at a time and completely sanitized after each use.
10. We have provided EAP (Employee Assistant Program) supports to our staff and have expanded it to include those staff who do not qualify for employee benefits. The MCCSS has also provided additional free resources for employees to seek counselling if needed.
11. Passports funding- expansion of eligible expenses to include sensory items, technology, supplies for home-based hobbies and activities; PPE etc.

<https://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/developmental/serviceSupport/passport.aspx>

## Temporary changes to eligible expenses

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are temporarily expanding the list of eligible expenses under the Passport program to support people and their families while community-based activities and settings are closed. These changes allow you to use your funding for goods and services that may make it easier for you to stay at home during this time and practise physical distancing.

New eligible expenses include:

### 1. Sensory Items

- To support recipients who rely on sensory items to alleviate anxiety/stress and/or support any clinical or behavioural plans.
  - e.g. multi-sensory related products and technologies.

### 2. Technology

- Provide program participants the means and ability to stay safe, connected, and occupied and engaged at home, including in virtual and online learning and skill development activities:
  - Laptops and tablets;
  - Online educational and e-learning activities and resources;
  - Videogames and videogame systems;
  - Webcams and microphones;
  - Media service subscriptions and platforms (e.g. Netflix, Xbox Live, Disney+);
  - E-readers (e.g. Kindle or Kobo); and
  - Remote monitoring devices and medical alert services and devices (e.g. to support people living in SIL or independently).
- The approval of technology will also support the virtual engagement of people with disabilities and connections for families, providing some relief from caregiving requirements and alleviating some of the impacts of physical distancing.

### **3. Activities and items to support home-based recreation and fitness activities that would otherwise be accessed through day programs, school and other community-based programs:**

- Supplies to support **home-based hobbies and activities**. Some examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Arts and craft supplies;
  - Hobby supplies;
  - Puzzles and games; and
  - Books for leisure/learning.
- Supplies to support **home-based physical activity and fitness**. This may include but is not limited to:
  - Indoor items and equipment (e.g. skipping rope, yoga mat, resistance bands); and
  - fitness/sport equipment and supplies that may be used on the individual's property (e.g. basketball net, trampoline, frisbee, badminton set)

### **4. Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies, When Available**

- This is intended to enable program participants and their support workers to be supported more safely at home or as required, in the community, which may be of heightened importance to children/adults who are immunocompromised:
  - Gloves;
  - Masks;
  - Gowns;
  - Cleaning supplies (disinfectant wipes, sprays, and hand sanitizer); and
  - Where required, goggles and face shields.

#### **5. Essential Service Delivery Fees**

- Families caring for people with physical and/or developmental disabilities, particularly families caring for family members who are medically fragile, may not be able to leave their homes for groceries or pharmacy needs because of the vulnerability of their family member and/or because of their care requirements.
- If necessary, service delivery fees for essential items such as groceries and medication will be an admissible expense.
  - e.g. Instacart by Loblaw's, pharmacy deliveries

#### **6. Behavioral Support Plans and Related Interventions**

- Development of behavioural support plans and recommended interventions (delivered in person or remotely/virtually) and/or support strategies to reduce challenging behaviours or potential crisis situations intended to assist families to more safely support their family member at home.

All other inadmissible expenditures outlined in the [program guidelines](#) remain in effect.

These changes are temporary and the existing program terms and conditions will continue to apply upon the government providing notice. You will be given as much advanced notice as possible to prepare for the return of regular business once the government provides notice.

To make it easier for people who receive this funding to take advantage of these changes quickly, we are also giving you 25 per cent of your funding for this year in advance. You should save all receipts, invoices and supporting documents with proof of payment for these expenses. In response to the challenges arising from the COVID-19 outbreak, we are also waiving the deadline to file your claims.

I want to personally thank all the families for their incredible support and providing meals to our staff and those supported. Your support makes a difference! We will get

through this together and I hope that some time soon, you will be able to reconnect with your loved ones. Stay strong, stay safe and stay healthy.

In this together,

Kathy Loveys  
Executive Director  
Parents for Community Living KW Inc.