



**SHINING WATERS
REGIONAL COUNCIL**
The United Church of Canada

Encouraging and Connecting Communities of Faith

April 21, 2021

The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development
by email only: premier@ontario.ca; monte.mcnaughtonco@pc.ola.org

Dear Premier Ford & Minister McNaughton,

Subject: Paid Sick Days for Ontario Workers

On behalf of Shining Waters Regional Council, I am writing to urge the Ontario Government to legislate paid sick days for every single working Ontarian.

Despite evidence and advice from physicians and epidemiologists, as well as the overwhelming calls from constituents across the province, your Government has failed to institute sick pay for Ontario workers. Many of these employees have been working in essential jobs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic — jobs that often necessitate being onsite, among colleagues and the general public. Although employees who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 are being asked to remain home and self-isolate, those who cannot afford any loss in wages are going back to work, potentially infecting co-workers and the general public.

While the federal government has implemented the Canadian Recovery Sickness Benefit, it is not available to all Ontario workers. In addition, the time between application and dispersal of funds can be upwards of six to eight weeks. Ontarians need assurance that their wages will continue without disruption if they are ill and need to stay home. Small businesses need assurance that they will have assistance with implementing paid sick leave.

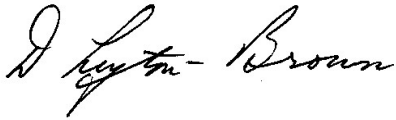
No person should need to choose between spreading an infectious disease and feeding their family. A recent poll performed by EKOS found that 70 percent of Ontarians support five days of paid sick leave per year; 64 percent support 10 days. An overwhelming number of Ontario residents understand the importance of not forcing workers into unfair choices between health and wages — especially those employees with low incomes, who are disproportionately racialized individuals, women and people living with a disability.

Sadly, we are already seeing the dire consequences of community members not isolating or remaining at home. As COVID cases continue to skyrocket, now more than ever we need to implement every ethical measure possible to contain the spread of this deadly virus. The urgency of this matter cannot be overstated: When people are ill they need to stay home and isolate. This cannot happen if they are afraid of not being able to meet their financial obligations.

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As members of The United Church of Canada, we come from a tradition where loving God is inextricably tied to loving our neighbour. There are countless examples in sacred scripture of Jesus and the prophets needing time to rest and heal so that they might be well enough to carry on with the work at hand. In this case, loving our neighbour means providing for the time needed to rest and recover, so that our communities may remain safe from growing numbers of infection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Leyton-Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

David Leyton-Brown, President
Shining Waters Regional Council

cc:

Andrea Horwath, MPP, Leader of the Opposition, ahorwath-qp@ndp.on.ca

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