

Ontario Health Coalition

COVID-19 UPDATE

March 24, 2020

We have gathered the following information (sources are included) for your information. This round up includes:

- List of COVID-19 Assessment Centres in Ontario
 - Number of cases/status in Ontario
 - List of hospital and long-term care health care workers & long-term care residents infected
 - List of federal and provincial Public Health officers' directives/recommendations
 - Ontario health care funding & capacity announcements
 - Ontario other supports & relief measures
 - Federal government health care funding & capacity measures
 - Federal government other supports & relief measures
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List of COVID-19 Assessment Centres in Ontario:

We updated the list yesterday and will update again tomorrow morning. For the most complete up-to-date list of assessment centres and the criteria for assessment that we have gathered [click here](#).

Number of COVID-19 Cases/Status in Ontario:

There are currently 572 confirmed cases with 10,074 additional people tested waiting for results. There are 8 resolved cases and 8 people who have died. Our hearts go out to their families and communities. The provincial government is reporting cases in a chart [here](#).

Hospital and Long-Term Care Health Care Workers & Long-Term Care Residents Infected with COVID-19:

The following lists the public reports that we have found regarding hospital staff and long-term care staff and residents that have tested positive. All our heartfelt wishes and hopes go to them and their families and to all Ontarians affected.

Bobcaygeon March 20 2020- Three residents of a long-term care home in the village of Bobcaygeon northeast of Lindsay, two men, ages 89 and 61 and a 94-year-old woman, have tested positive for COVID-19. Late Friday afternoon, Dr. Lynn Noseworthy, medical officer of health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, said the residents live at Pinecrest Nursing Home.¹

¹ Davis, Greg. *3 new COVID-19 cases confirmed at Bobcaygeon, Ont. long-term care home: health unit* [Global News](#). March 20 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6709951/new-covid-19-cases-confirmed-long-term-care-unit/>

Hamilton/Burlington

- March 11 2020- A 32-year-old radiation oncologist with the Hamilton Health Sciences' Juravinski Cancer Centre went into self-isolation in Burlington after testing for COVID-19.² She had recently returned from Hawaii. Her husband, a surgeon at St. Joseph's Healthcare, tested negative.³
- March 21 2020- Hamilton Public Health has declared a coronavirus outbreak at Heritage Green Nursing Home in Stoney Creek on Saturday March 21. The nursing home has two cases confirmed- an 80 year old resident reported on Wednesday March 18, and a 55 year old resident confirmed on Thursday March 19.⁴

Kitchener March 21 2020- More than 50 nurses at St. Mary's General Hospital in Kitchener were exposed to a patient who tested positive on Thursday March 19, and the six staff who demonstrated symptoms were referred to public health for "fast track testing".⁵

London

- March 20 2020- Public health officials in London announced that a primary health care worker at Strathroy Medical Clinic was Middlesex-London's second case. She went into isolation.⁶
- March 20 2020- London-area public health officials announced a nurse in her 20s at London Health Sciences Centre's University Hospital tested positive for the virus after returning from a trip to Las Vegas. She is now in self-isolation. Several of her colleagues were also sent home for isolation as a precaution.⁷

Markham

- March 21 2020- A resident at Markhaven Home for Seniors in Markham tested positive for coronavirus, as confirmed by the City of Markham.⁸
- March 23 2020- A worker at Markhaven Home for Seniors in Markham tested positive for coronavirus.⁹

² Mitchell, Don. *Coronavirus: Physician tested positive for COVID-19 says Hamilton public health* Global News. March 11 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6660378/coronavirus-physician-tests-positive-for-covid-19-says-hamilton-public-health/>

³ Frketch, Joanna. *COVID-19: Two more coronavirus cases found in Hamilton and Halton* The Hamilton Spectator. March 13 2020. <https://www.thespec.com/news-story/9904639-covid-19-two-more-coronavirus-cases-found-in-hamilton-and-halton/>

⁴ Zamperin, Rick. *Coronavirus outbreak declared at Hamilton nursing home* Global News. March 21 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6713474/hamilton-heritage-green-nursing-home-coronavirus/>

⁵ Thomson, Chris. *Dozens of nurses exposed to COVID-19 at St. Mary's Hospital: ONA* CTV News Kitchener. March 21 2020. <https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/dozens-of-nurses-exposed-to-covid-19-at-st-mary-s-hospital-ona-1.4862996>

⁶ Sims, Jane. *Strathroy healthcare worker first case since virus crackdown* The London Free Press. March 20 2020. <https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/london-woman-tests-positive-for-covid-19>

⁷ Bieman, Jennifer. *COVID-19: Several LHSC staffers self-isolating after symptomatic nurse worked for days before positive test* The London Free Press. March 20 2020. <https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/covid-19-several-lhsc-staffers-self-isolating-after-symptomatic-nurse-worked-for-days-before-positive-test>

⁸ Patton, Jessica. *Resident of Markham long-term care home tests positive for coronavirus* Global News. March 21 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6712589/markham-long-term-care-home-senior-coronavirus/>

⁹ Rocca, Ryan. *Coronavirus: Health-care worker at Markham, Ont. long-term care home tests positive* Global News. March 23 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6720123/coronavirus-markham-long-term-care-home-worker/>

Oshawa March 19 2020- The Region of Durham said two women, who are 80 and 92, and two men, who are 68 and 71, at the Hillsdale Terraces Long-Term Care Home in Oshawa tested positive for the virus on Wednesday March 18. All of the residents are being treated at the facility and are in isolation.¹⁰

Ottawa March 22 2020- A health care worker at the Ottawa Hospital tested positive for the virus by the Eastern Ontario Health Unit. The man, is in his 30s, lives in Prescott-Russell and is currently in self-isolation.¹¹

Toronto

- March 20 2020- A Toronto paramedic tested positive for COVID-19 as reported by Toronto Public Health on Friday March 20. They are at home in isolation.¹²
- March 20 2020- A resident at Seven Oaks long-term care home in Toronto is among to 60 new cases that were reported on Friday March 20.¹³
- March 22 2020- 13 health care workers in Toronto confirmed to have the virus including doctors, nurses, and personal support workers from various health care settings. This number was confirmed by Dr. Michael Finkelstein, Toronto's acting director of communicable disease control and associate medical officer of health.¹⁴

Woodstock March 18 2020- The test results of an employee at Woodstock General Hospital were confirmed as positive by the Brant County Health Unit on Tuesday March 17. The employee, in her 40s, worked at the hospital from March 9 to March 11, and is said to have limited patient contact.¹⁵

¹⁰ Westoll, Nick. *Coronavirus: 4 residents at Oshawa long-term care home test positive for COVID-19* Global News. March 19 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6704587/coronavirus-hillsdale-terraces-oshawa/>

¹¹ Pringle, Josh. *Ottawa Hospital health care worker tests positive for COVID-19* CTV News Ottawa. March 22 2020. <https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-hospital-health-care-worker-tests-positive-for-covid-19-1.4863355>

¹² Artuso, Antonella. *Toronto paramedic among spike of 60 new COVID-19 cases in Ontario*. Toronto Sun. March 20 2020. <https://torontosun.com/news/provincial/number-of-covid-19-cases-in-ontario-jumps-by-50>

¹³ Artuso, Antonella. *Toronto paramedic among spike of 60 new COVID-19 cases in Ontario*. Toronto Sun. March 20 2020. <https://torontosun.com/news/provincial/number-of-covid-19-cases-in-ontario-jumps-by-50>

¹⁴ Donovan, Kevin. *At least 13 Toronto doctors, nurses, long-term care workers infected with COVID-19* The Star. March 22 2020. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/03/22/at-least-thirteen-toronto-doctors-nurses-longterm-care-workers-infected-with-covid-19.html>

¹⁵ Ball, Vincent. *Woodstock Hospital employee tests positive for COVID-19* The London Free Press. March 18 2020. <https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/breaking-news-public-health-confirms-first-local-case-of-covid-19/wcm/becef431-1683-4fd4-bb16-01b8fc2efcc0>

Directives/Recommendations from Provincial & Federal Public Health Officers

Canada

- **March 13, 2020:** Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, advised against all international travel. The Government of Canada continues to monitor and add travel advisories for various countries.¹⁶
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- **March 9, 2020:** Dr. Theresa Tam recommended that Canadian avoid all travel on cruise ships due to COVID-19.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **March 3, 2020:** Dr. Theresa Tam recommends for communities to prepare for stronger public health measures to contain the spread of the new coronavirus, including closures of schools and workplaces and the suspension of large-scale gathering.¹⁸
- **February 27, 2020:** Dr. Theresa Tam warns that the window to contain COVID-19 is closing and announces that officials are shifting to preparing to manage the spread of the virus. Both Dr. Tam and Federal Health Minister Patty Hadju advised Canadians to prepare by ensuring they have enough food and medical supplies at home, as well as back-up childcare arrangements, in case they fall ill.
- **January 30, 2020:** Dr. Theresa Tam urged a stop to racist acts and stigmatizing comments on social media against people of Chinese and Asian descent in the wake of the COVID-19.
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Ontario

- **March 23, 2020:** Based on advice from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, the Ontario government has mandated that all non-essential workplaces must close.¹⁹
- **March 16, 2020:** Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, advised people to avoid gatherings of over 50 people and requested the closure of libraries, recreation programs, private schools, churches, bars and restaurants.²⁰
- **March 15, 2020:** Ontario has asked all hospitals to, amongst other principles, “develop and preserve” hospital capacity to deal with the pandemic.²¹
- **March 14, 2020:** Ontario’s chief medical officer of health Dr. David Williams urged long-term care residences to bar all but “essential visitors,” such as the relatives of people who are dying or gravely ill.

¹⁶ Harris, Kathleen. *Government warns against all international travel, limits inbound flights to stop spread of COVID-19*, *CBC News*, March 13, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-covid-19-1.5496367>

¹⁷ Harris, Kathleen. *Government warns against all international travel, limits inbound flights to stop spread of COVID-19*, *CBC News*, March 13, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-covid-19-1.5496367>

¹⁸ Eggerston, Laura. *COVID-19: Recent updates on the coronavirus pandemic*, *CMAJ News*, March 24, 2020, <https://cmajnews.com/2020/03/24/coronavirus-1095847/>

¹⁹ Office of the premier. *Ontario orders the mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces to fight spread of COVID-19*, *Ontario Newsroom*, March 23, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/ontario-orders-the-mandatory-closure-of-all-non-essential-workplaces-to-fight-spread-of-covid-19.html>

²⁰ Ministry of Health. *Enhanced measures to protect Ontarians from COVID-19*, *Ontario Newsroom*, March 16, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2020/03/enhanced-measures-to-protect-ontarians-from-covid-19.html>

²¹ Ministry of Health. *Ontario hospitals asked to take a planned approach to ramping down elective surgeries*, *Ontario Newsroom*, March 15, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2020/03/ontario-hospitals-asked-to-take-a-planned-approach-to-ramping-down-elective-surgeries.html>

- **March 13, 2020:** Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health recommended the immediate suspension of all gatherings over 250 people.²²
- **March 12, 2020:** Directive from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, to close public schools for two weeks after March Break, until April 5, 2020.²³

Provincial Health Care Funding & Capacity Announcements

- March 23 -- Ontario increased the line capacity of Telehealth Ontario to more than 2000 to deal with the influx of COVID-19 calls, says it has also established 58 assessment centres across the province and is looking to increase that number.²⁴
- March 20 --The Ottawa Hospital revealed plans to triple the number of intensive care unit beds from 28 to 100 for each of its two campuses, says it has some medical supplies on hand for a pandemic, and will potentially use other sites and facilities to deal with an influx of COVID-19 cases.²⁵
- March 17 -- Ontario announced a \$300 million investment in health care to combat COVID-19.²⁶ The \$300 million will be used to fund a 1000 increase in backfill nurses and personal support workers, 75 new critical care beds, 500 post-acute care beds and 50 emergency physicians for Indigenous, rural, and remote communities.²⁷
- March 15 -- Ontario requested all hospitals to carefully decrease the number of elective surgeries and other non-emergent activity to preserve capacity for COVID-19 cases.²⁸
- March 11 -- Premier Ford announced a \$100 million contingency fund to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. This money would go towards medical supplies, additional staff, testing kits,

²² Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. *Statement from Minister Elliott and Minister MacLeod on the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19)*, Ontario Newsroom, March 13, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/mtc/en/2020/03/statement-from-minister-elliott-and-minister-macleod-on-the-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-1.html>

²³ Office of the premier. *Statement from Premier Ford, Minister Elliott, and Minister Lecce on the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19)*, Ontario Newsroom, March 12, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/title.html>

²⁴ Ministry of Health. *Ontario Significantly Enhancing COVID-19 Screening Measures and Supports*, Ontario Newsroom, March 23, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2020/03/ontario-significantly-enhancing-covid-19-screening-measures-and-supports.html>

²⁵ Duffy, Andrew. *The Ottawa Hospital has a plan to triple the number of ICU beds: doctor*, Ottawa Citizen, March 20, 2020, <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/the-ottawa-hospital-has-a-plan-to-triple-the-number-of-icu-beds-doctor>

²⁶ Office of the premier. *Ontario enacts declaration of emergency to protect the public*, Ontario Newsroom, March 17, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/ontario-enacts-declaration-of-emergency-to-protect-the-public.html>

²⁷ Paling, Emma. *Doug Ford delivers coronavirus speech to near-empty legislature*, Huffington Post, March 19, 2020, https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/doug-ford-coronavirus-empty-legislature_ca_5e73d9cac5b63c3b648d2f75

²⁸ Ministry of Health. *Ontario hospitals asked to take a planned approach to ramping down elective surgeries*, Ontario Newsroom, March 15, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2020/03/ontario-hospitals-asked-to-take-a-planned-approach-to-ramping-down-elective-surgeries.html>

protective gear and anything else deemed necessary.²⁹ It is not clear if this was reannounced the next week.

Ontario Government Support and Relief Measures

Funding for Emergency Assistance Programs March 23 2020 - The Provincial government announced \$200 million dollars in additional funding for emergency social assistance programs. \$148 million of this funding will go directly to municipal programs such as shelters, food banks, charities and non-profits, and emergency services.³⁰ They are also changing the requirements for emergency assistance for those who are unable to pay rent or buy food and other essential goods. This additional funding will be available through any of the previous programs (**ODSP or Ontario Works**) or can be directly applied for [here](#). They have changed the rules to allow for people to receive the benefits more than once per 6 month time period and to remove the 48 day maximum for coverage without submitting an Ontario Works application.³¹ It is unclear at this time how much Emergency funding will go towards emergency supports or how much will be granted per person nor the requirements for qualifying for this emergency fund.

Ontario Freezes Evictions March 18, 2020 - In response to the economic hardships resulting from the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, Ford announces a freeze on issuing new eviction notices and suspension of all pending evictions.³² This is in response to a growing demand for rent to be deferred or placed on hold since mortgage payments have been deferred.³³

OHIP Waiting Period Waived, Uninsured Covered, Expiring Health Cards to be Honoured - Following Trudeau's call for all Canadians abroad to return home in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario government announces that OHIP coverage will start immediately when they return. Previously, Canadians who have been out of the province for more than seven months

²⁹ Ferguson, Rob. *We have 'a plan for every scenario' Ford says, as Ontario sets aside \$100 million to fight COVID-19*, *Toronto Star*, March 11 2020, <https://www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/2020/03/11/we-have-a-plan-for-every-scenario-ford-says-as-ontario-sets-aside-100-million-to-fight-covid-19.html>

³⁰ CBC News. *Health officials give update, as Ontario closes all non-essential businesses amid COVID-19 outbreak*. CBC News. March 23, 2020 https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/covid-19-coronavirus-ontario-monday1.5506445?_vz=medium%3Dsharebar&fbclid=IwAR3pI1ZU9DkBgZUJiIw4kJsC92ir63ifHM5XRR3x5bk_ZQ-T-06aFkGMqm00

³¹ Office of the Premier. *Changes to Ontario's Emergency Assistance Program in Response to COVID-19*. Ontario News Room. March 23 2020. <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/changes-to-ontarios-emergency-assistance-program-in-response-to-covid-19.html>

³² Katawazi, Miriam. *Ontario freezes evictions, temporarily halts scheduled orders due to COVID-19*. CTV News. March 18 2020. <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-freezes-evictions-temporarily-halts-scheduled-orders-due-to-covid-19-1.4856404>

³³ Nanowski, Natalie. *Here's what's available to help Ontario renters through COVID-19*. CBC. March 21 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/renters-covid19-coronavirus-mortgage-virus-1.5505144>

would be required to wait three months before they would be covered by OHIP again.³⁴ ³⁵ In addition, they expanded OHIP coverage for COVID-19 testing and treatment of those who do not meet the criteria for OHIP coverage.³⁶ They also announced that people with expiring OHIP cards would continue to be covered. These new regulations include extensions for driver licences, licence plate validation, Ontario Photo Cards, and Commercial Vehicle Operator Registration certificates, among others. The extension will be in place until conditions improve.³⁷

Reduced Hydro Rates March 24, 2020 -- The Ontario government announced that Hydro rates will be reduced to off peak levels for the next 45 days.³⁸

Child Care for Frontline Workers March 22, 2020 – The Ontario government exempted certain child care centres from the mandatory closure orders and announced that child care would be available at these centres for front line medical and emergency staff.³⁹

Federal Government Health Care Funding & Capacity Measures

COVID-19 Response Fund March 11- Canada established a more than \$1 billion COVID-19 Response Fund⁴⁰ as follows:

- \$500 million (as part of the \$1 billion) to provinces and territories for critical health care system needs and to support mitigation efforts as needed. They said that this could include help to support with access to testing, acquisition of equipment, and to enhance surveillance and monitoring.⁴¹

³⁴ D'Melo, Colin. *Ontario to waive three-month OHIP waiting period for returning Canadians*. CTV News. March 19 2020. <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-to-waive-three-month-ohip-waiting-period-for-returning-canadians-1.4858781>

³⁵ Ministry of Health. *Ontario Expands Coverage for Care*. Ontario News Room. March 20, 2020. <https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2020/03/ontario-expands-coverage-for-care.html>

³⁶ <https://settlement.org/news/ontario/ontario-expands-ohip-coverage/>

³⁷ Ontario Ministry of Transportation. *Ontario Extending Validation Periods for Driver, Vehicle and Carrier Products, Services and Health Cards*. Ontario News Room. March 19, 2020. <https://news.ontario.ca/mto/en/2020/03/ontario-extending-validation-periods-for-driver-vehicle-and-carrier-products-services-and-health-car.html>

³⁸ Office of the Premier. *Ontario Providing Electricity Relief to Families, Small Businesses and Farms During COVID-19*. News Room. March 24, 2020. <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/ontario-providing-electricity-relief-to-families-small-businesses-and-farms-during-covid-19.html>

³⁹ Ministry of Education. *Province Takes Steps to Ensure Frontline Workers Can Continue to Work*. News Room. March 22, 2020.

⁴⁰ *Prime Minister outlines Canada's COVID-19 response* JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA. March 11 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/11/prime-minister-outlines-canadas-covid-19-response>

⁴¹ *Government of Canada takes action on COVID-19* Government of Canada. March 13 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse/government-canada-takes-action-covid-19.html>

- For supplies of personal protective equipment like surgical masks, face shields, and isolation gowns by providing \$50 million to the Public Health Agency of Canada to support purchases for provinces and territories.
- \$50 million to support initial actions, including border and travel measures and sustained activation of the Health Portfolio Operations Centre and the National Microbiology Laboratory.
- \$100 million for federal public health measures such as enhanced surveillance, increased testing at the National Microbiology Laboratory, and ongoing support for preparedness in First Nations and Inuit communities.⁴²

Communication about Coronavirus There is a [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus) website, which includes information resources that Canadians can download on the novel coronavirus, how to be prepared and how to limit the spread of the virus.

- The Government of Canada's coronavirus information line was established (1-833-784-4397), which is available from 7:00 a.m. to midnight (EST) seven days a week.⁴³
- \$50 million (part of the \$1 billion COVID-19 Response Fund) was dedicated to the Public Health Agency of Canada's dedicated communications capacity and public education efforts.⁴⁴

Research

- March 6 2020- announced \$26.8 million over 2 years to fund coronavirus research in Canada. This investment will support 47 research teams from across Canada that will focus on accelerating the development, testing and implementation of measures to deal with the outbreak.
- The Government of Canada will invest \$275 million (part of the \$1 billion COVID-19 Response Fund) in additional funding to enhance research capacity on vaccine and antiviral development and clinical trials, including in Canada.⁴⁵
- March 19 2020- \$25.8 million of the \$275 million announced on March 6 will be given to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to add 49 new projects to the 47 projects previously announced on March 6.⁴⁶ [Click here for details on each of the funded projects.](#)

⁴² *Prime Minister outlines Canada's COVID-19 response* JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA. March 11 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/11/prime-minister-outlines-canadas-covid-19-response>

⁴³ *Government of Canada takes action on COVID-19* Government of Canada. March 13 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse/government-canada-takes-action-covid-19.html>

⁴⁴ *Prime Minister outlines Canada's COVID-19 response* JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA. March 11 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/11/prime-minister-outlines-canadas-covid-19-response>

⁴⁵ *Prime Minister outlines Canada's COVID-19 response* JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA. March 11 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/11/prime-minister-outlines-canadas-covid-19-response>

⁴⁶ *Government of Canada funds 49 additional COVID-19 research projects* Government of Canada. March 19 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/institutes-health-research/news/2020/03/government-of-canada-funds-49-additional-covid-19-research-projects.html>

Federal Government Other Supports & Relief Measures

Initial response \$7.1 million was provided to support the repatriation of Canadians and \$2 million was contributed to the World Health Organization to support their efforts to contain the outbreak.⁴⁷

Support to other countries The Government of Canada provided China with approximately 16 tonnes of personal protective equipment—such as clothing, face shields, masks, goggles and gloves—to support China's response to the outbreak provide an additional \$50 million in international assistance to the World Health Organization and other partners for potential bi-lateral support for developing countries in response to COVID-19.⁴⁸

Employment Insurance sickness benefits⁴⁹ March 18 2020- Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits provide up to 15 weeks of income replacement and are available to eligible claimants who are unable to work because of illness, injury or quarantine.

You need to demonstrate that:

- you're unable to work for medical reasons
- your regular weekly earnings from work have decreased by more than 40% for at least one week
- you accumulated 600 insured hours* of work in the 52 weeks before the start of your claim or since the start of your last claim, whichever is shorter
 - *As an example, 600 hours are equivalent to 20 weeks of work at 30 hours a week.

While you're receiving sickness benefits, you must remain available for work if it weren't for your medical condition. [Click here for more information on EI Sickness Benefits.](#)

- March 11 2020- The mandatory one-week waiting period for EI sickness benefits has been waived for a minimum of 6 months for workers in imposed quarantine or who have been directed to self-isolate. The requirement for a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits has also been waived. People who cannot complete their claim for EI sickness benefits due to quarantine may apply later and have their EI claim backdated to cover the period of delay.
- If you are directly affected by the COVID-19 because you are sick or quarantined and you have not yet applied for EI benefits, they ask that you please submit your application before contacting them.
- If you have already completed the application for EI sickness benefits whether you are sick or quarantined and would like to have the one-week waiting period waived, call the new toll-free phone number below. It is important to note that no other request will be actioned on this phone line. Telephone: 1-833-381-2725 (toll-free) or (TTY): 1-800-529-3742.

Changes to tax-filing and payment deadlines⁵⁰ March 20 2020- For individuals (other than trusts), the return filing due date will be deferred until June 1, 2020. However, the Agency encourages individuals who expect to receive benefits under the GSTC or the Canada Child Benefit not to delay the

⁴⁷ *Government of Canada takes action on COVID-19* [Government of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse/government-canada-takes-action-covid-19.html). March 13 2020.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse/government-canada-takes-action-covid-19.html>

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⁴⁹ *Income Support for Individuals Who Need It Most* [Government of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html#Income_Support_for). March 18 2020.
https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html#Income_Support_for

⁵⁰ *Important changes to tax-filing and payment deadlines* [Government of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update.html#individuals). March 20 2020.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update.html#individuals>

filing of their return to ensure their entitlements for the 2020-21 benefit year are properly determined. For trusts having a taxation year ending on December 31, 2019, the return filing due date will be deferred until May 1, 2020.

- The Canada Revenue Agency will allow all taxpayers to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after today and before September 2020. This relief would apply to tax balances due, as well as instalments, under Part I of the Income Tax Act. No interest or penalties will accumulate on these amounts during this period.
- Effective immediately as of Wednesday March 18, the Canada Revenue Agency will recognize electronic signatures as having met the signature requirements of the Income Tax Act, as a temporary administrative measure. This provision applies to authorization forms T183 or T183CORP.

[Click here for more information on changes to tax-filing and payment deadlines.](#)

If you're planning to go to a free tax clinic, please check the directory before you go. Some clinics may have had to close or change their hours due to concerns regarding COVID-19.

[Click here for the directory of free tax clinics.](#)

CRA Outreach⁵¹ March 19 2020- The Canada Revenue Agency is adapting its Outreach Program which is to help individuals to better understand their tax obligations, benefits or credits. Traditionally available in-person, this service is now available over the phone, and through webinar, where possible by completing a request online. [Click here for more information about CRA Outreach, including how to request a session.](#)

Emergency Loan Program for Canadians Abroad⁵² March 19 2020- The COVID-19 Emergency Loan Program for Canadians Abroad will provide the option of an emergency loan to Canadians in need of immediate financial assistance to return home or to temporarily cover their life-sustaining needs while they work toward their return. [Click here for what type of expenses can be covered.](#)

- If you are eligible, you will be able to apply for an emergency repayable loan to the Government of Canada of up to \$5,000 to help you return to Canada and to cover your short-term needs while you work toward returning.
- You are eligible if you are a Canadian citizen impacted by COVID-19 who plans to return to Canada and who has no other source of funds. They will consider that you plan to return to Canada if you:
 - Had a return flight booked and your flight was cancelled or delayed
 - Attempted to book a flight, but cannot due to the travel restrictions or exorbitant pricing
 - If you are a Canadian citizen travelling with an immediate family member who is a permanent resident of Canada (PR), you may include eligible expenses for the PR family member in your application. Immediate family is defined as spouse, parents and children
- Eligible Canadians currently outside Canada who need financial assistance can contact the

⁵¹ *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Outreach and Liaison Officer services* [Government of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/covid-19-outreach-liaison-officer-services.html), March 19 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/covid-19-outreach-liaison-officer-services.html>

⁵² *Frequently asked questions - COVID-19 Emergency Loan Program for Canadians Abroad* [Government of Canada](https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/financial-assistance/covid-19-financial-help-faqs#3), March 19 2020. <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/financial-assistance/covid-19-financial-help-faqs#3>

nearest Government of Canada office or Global Affairs Canada's 24/7 Emergency Watch and Response Centre in Ottawa at +1 613-996-8885 (call collect where available) or CAN.finances.CV19@international.gc.ca.

Farm Credit Canada (FCC)^{53 54} March 20 2020- To ensure producers, agribusinesses and food processors can remain focused on business-critical functions, FCC has increased credit available to farmers and the agri-food sector. [Click here for more information.](#)

- In addition, all eligible farmers who have an outstanding Advance Payments Program (APP) loan due on or before April 30 will receive a Stay of Default, allowing them an additional six months to repay the loan.⁵⁵

Canada's Regional Development Agencies⁵⁶ March 14 2020- If you are a tourism operator, a small business or an organization that has received RDA funding and COVID-19 is affecting your operations, you are encouraged to contact your local RDA office. You may be eligible to receive additional funding and/or flexible arrangements. If not, they can also assist you with access to federal funding to help you stay in business, advice, and services to other federal programs and services available.

Canada's Regional Development Agencies:

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency: 1-800-561-7862
- Western Economic Diversification Canada: 1-888-338-WEST (9378)
- FedNor: 1-877-333-6673
- Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency: 1-855-897-2667
- FedDevOntario: 1-866-593-5505
- Canadian Economic Development for Quebec Regions: 1-866-385-64

Emergency Care Benefit⁵⁷ The Emergency Care Benefit will provide up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks. This flat-payment Benefit would provide income support to:

- Workers, including the self-employed, who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
- Workers, including the self-employed, who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19, such as an elderly parent, but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
- Parents with children who require care or supervision due to school closures, and are unable to earn employment income, irrespective of whether they qualify for EI or not.

Application for the Benefit will be available in April 2020, and require Canadians to attest that they meet the eligibility requirements. They will need to re-attest every two weeks to reconfirm their eligibility.

You need to select one of three channels to apply for the Benefit:

- by accessing it on their CRA My Account secure portal;

⁵³ *Resources for Canadian Businesses* [Government of Canada](#). March 20 2020.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business/maintaingrowimprovebusiness/resources-for-canadian-businesses.html>

⁵⁴ *Our response to COVID-19* [Canada Farm Credit](#). March 20 2020. <https://www.fcc-fac.ca/en/covid-19.html>

⁵⁵ *Prime Minister announces support for farmers and agri-food businesses under Canada's response to COVID-19* JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA. March 23 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/23/prime-minister-announces-support-farmers-and-agri-food-businesses>

⁵⁶ *Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)* [Government of Canada](#). March 14 2020. <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/icgc.nsf/eng/07677.html>

⁵⁷ *Canada Revenue Agency: Helping Canadians with the economic impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic* [Government of Canada](#). March 18 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update.html#individuals>

- by accessing it from their secure My Service Canada Account; or
- by calling a toll free number equipped with an automated application process.

Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payment amounts⁵⁸

The Government is proposing to increase the maximum annual CCB payment amounts, only for the 2019-20 benefit year, by \$300 per child as part of their May payment. If you have previously applied for the CCB, you do not need to re-apply. For more information on the Canada Child Benefit such as how to apply and eligibility requirements call 1-800-387-1193 or [click here](#).

Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans⁵⁹ The Government of Canada has announced its plan to pause the repayment of Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans until September 30, 2020, with no accrual of interest. Pending parliamentary approval, effective March 30 2020 all student loan borrowers will automatically have their repayments suspended until September 30, 2020. No payment will be required and interest will not accrue during this time. Students do not need to apply for the repayment pause. This will include pre-authorized debits. Students who are currently studying can continue to apply for Canada Student Loans. There will be no change to the application process.

Temporary Wage Subsidy for Employers⁶⁰ March 19 2020- The Temporary Wage Subsidy for Employers is a three-month measure that will allow eligible employers to reduce the amount of payroll deductions required to be remitted to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). [Click here to learn more about the Temporary Wage Subsidy for Employers](#).

Work-Sharing (WS)⁶¹ Work-Sharing (WS) is an adjustment program designed to help employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary reduction in the normal level of business activity that is beyond the control of the employer. The measure provides income support to employees eligible for Employment Insurance benefits who work a temporarily reduced work week while their employer recovers.

- The Government of Canada introduced temporary special measures that extend the maximum duration of Work-Sharing agreements from 38 weeks to 76 weeks across Canada for those businesses affected by the downturn in business due to COVID-19 and for the forestry and steel and aluminum sector. Temporary special measures are effective March 15, 2020 to March 14, 2021. [Click here for the Work-Sharing temporary special measures page to find out if you are eligible for temporary special measures](#).

[Click here for the Work-Sharing page to learn more about the program and its requirements](#).

⁵⁸ ESDC Corporate information: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) – Notices- Benefits and services [Government of Canada](#). March 23 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html#h2.5>

⁵⁹ ESDC Corporate information: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) – Notices- Benefits and services [Government of Canada](#). March 23 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html#h2.5>

⁶⁰ *Frequently Asked Questions – Temporary Wage Subsidy for Employers* [Government of Canada](#). March 20 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/frequently-asked-questions-wage-subsidy-small-businesses.html>

⁶¹ *Work-Sharing Program - Temporary special measures for the downturn in business due to COVID-19 and for the forestry and steel and aluminum sector* [Government of Canada](#). March 19 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/work-sharing/temporary-measures-forestry-sector.html>

Community Support Fund⁶² March 18 2020- \$305 million for a new distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund to address immediate needs in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities.

Reaching Home Initiative⁶³ March 18 2020- Providing the Reaching Home initiative with \$157.5 million for people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 outbreak. The government says the funding could be used for a range of needs such as purchasing beds and physical barriers for social distancing and securing accommodation to reduce overcrowding in shelters.

Women’s shelters and sexual assault centres⁶⁴ March 18 2020- Providing up to \$50 million to women’s shelters and sexual assault centres to help with their capacity to manage or prevent an outbreak in their facilities. This includes funding for facilities in Indigenous communities.

Mortgage Default Management⁶⁵ March 18 2020- The government is launching a revised Insured Mortgage Purchase Program (IMPP), a market liquidity tool that was used in the Global Financial Crisis. Under this program, the federal government will purchase up to \$50 billion of insured mortgage pools through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).⁶⁶ CMHC will permit lenders to allow payment deferral for homeowners beginning immediately. Details of the terms of the purchase operations will be provided to lenders by CMHC later this week.⁶⁷

Business Credit Availability Program⁶⁸ March 13 2020- The government announced the establishment of a Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) to help Canadian businesses obtain financing during the “current period of significant uncertainty.” Participating private sector lenders have committed to working with BDC/EDC to find solutions for creditworthy business clients who would otherwise have insufficient access to credit, and ensuring that the extension of credit by BDC/EDC is incremental for Canadian businesses and does not displace or substitute for private credit in aggregate.

⁶² *Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians and Businesses* Government of Canada. March 18 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>

⁶³ *Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians and Businesses* Government of Canada. March 18 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>

⁶⁴ *Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians and Businesses* Government of Canada. March 18 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>

⁶⁵ *Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians and Businesses* Government of Canada. March 18 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html#Mortgage_Default_Management

⁶⁶ *A Message from our President to our Clients (COVID-19)* Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. March 17 2020. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/media-newsroom/notices/2020/message-from-president-to-clients-covid-19>

⁶⁷ *Government of Canada Announces Further Measures to Support Continued Lending to Canadian Consumers and Businesses* Canada Mortgage and Housing Company. March 16 2020. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/media-newsroom/news-releases/2020/measures-support-continued-lending-canadian-consumers-businesses>

⁶⁸ *Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP)* Government of Canada. March 20 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/financial-sector-policy/business-credit-availability-program.html>

All credit-worthy businesses with viable business models whose activities fall within the mandate of either BDC and/or EDC are eligible to benefit from BCAP. Businesses interested in accessing the BCAP should directly contact their financial institution, which will contact BDC and/or EDC where appropriate. BCAP is currently available.

Assisted departures The Government of Canada has supported the repatriation of Canadians from high-risk areas, including Wuhan, China, the Diamond Princess cruise ship that was docked in Yokohama, Japan⁶⁹, and the Grand Princess cruise ship docked in San Francisco, USA.⁷⁰

To Be Announced

The government has yet to provide more information on the following:

- Emergency Support Benefit- for workers who are not eligible for EI and who are facing unemployment.⁷¹
- Goods and Services Tax credit (GSTC) payment amounts- the Government is proposing to provide a one-time special payment by early May 2020 through the GSTC. This will double the maximum annual GSTC payment amounts for the 2019-20 benefit year.⁷²
- Registered Retirement Income Funds (RRIFs)- the Government is proposing targeted help by reducing required minimum withdrawals from Registered Retirement Income Funds (RRIFs) by 25% for 2020.⁷³
- The Liaison Officer service for small businesses to be made aware of any tax changes such as filing and payment deadlines, proactive relief measures, etc., will offered over the phone. No number has been provided as of March 23.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Government of Canada evacuating Canadians on board Diamond Princess cruise ship* Government of Canada. February 15 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2020/02/government-of-canada-evacuating-canadians-on-board-diamond-princess-cruise-ship.html>

⁷⁰ *Government of Canada evacuating Canadians on board Grand Princess cruise ship* Government of Canada. March 8 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2020/03/government-of-canada-evacuating-canadians-on-board-grand-princess-cruise-ship.html>

⁷¹ *Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians and Businesses* Government of Canada. March 23 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html#Support_for_Canadians

⁷² *Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians and Businesses* Government of Canada. March 23 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html#Income_Support_for

⁷³ *Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Support for Canadians and Businesses* Government of Canada. March 23 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html#Income_Support_for

⁷⁴ *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Outreach and Liaison Officer services* Government of Canada. March 19 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/covid-19-outreach-liaison-officer-services.html>