

**Ministry of Labour,  
Training and Skills  
Development**

Office of the Minister

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Honourable Carla Qualtrough  
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development & Disability Inclusion  
140 Promenade du Portage  
Gatineau, QC K1A 0J9

January 27, 2021

Dear Minister,

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss how our two governments can continue working closely together to support the hard-working people of Ontario and their families. We share the same goal; ensuring nobody has to choose between their job and their health.

In July, Premier Ford negotiated a historic \$19-billion Safe Restart Agreement with your government to provide over \$1-billion for [ten paid sick days](#). We agreed that our province would protect people's jobs and your federal government would protect their income.

Ontario has done its part, since day one. The first piece of legislation we passed provides workers and their families with unlimited job protection for a wide range of issues relating to COVID-19, including self-isolating, being sick or caring for a loved one, and eliminated the need for sick notes. Our government will keep this protection in place until this disease is defeated.

Your government introduced paid sick days through the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB) program. We agree that maximizing this program, not duplicating efforts, is the best way to support our workers and their families.

I appreciate that it is difficult to design a perfect program when moving at the speed required during the pandemic. Now that the program is up and running – and has served over 110,000 people – there are important issues that need to be solved.

- **Faster Pay** – Any delay is difficult for individuals who are living paycheque to paycheque. Everything possible must be done to get money into people's pockets faster.
- **Greater Awareness** – Many workers are not aware of the benefits available to them or find it challenging to select the right one to apply for. If there is any way our government can support your communications, we would be happy to help.

- Easier Access – The current requirement for workers to lose 50% of a work week before they can qualify does not align with advice for workers to stay home when they are first feeling sick or awaiting test results and should be removed.
- Repeat Access – Workers can currently only apply for the benefit for two 1-week periods between September 27, 2020 to September 25, 2021. However, workers sometimes experience multiple COVID-19 scares that require taking time off work to test and/or quarantine (e.g., personal support workers who get exposed multiple times). I ask your government to relax this limit.

I understand that you are amending the legislation to close the loophole of paid quarantine for those who choose to travel internationally. This is the perfect opportunity to improve the program for those making the right choice to quarantine to protect others.

By working together, we continue to protect the health and economic well-being of the people of Ontario, and I am confident we will defeat this deadly virus. I look forward to our continuing collaboration.

Sincerely,



Monte McNaughton  
Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development