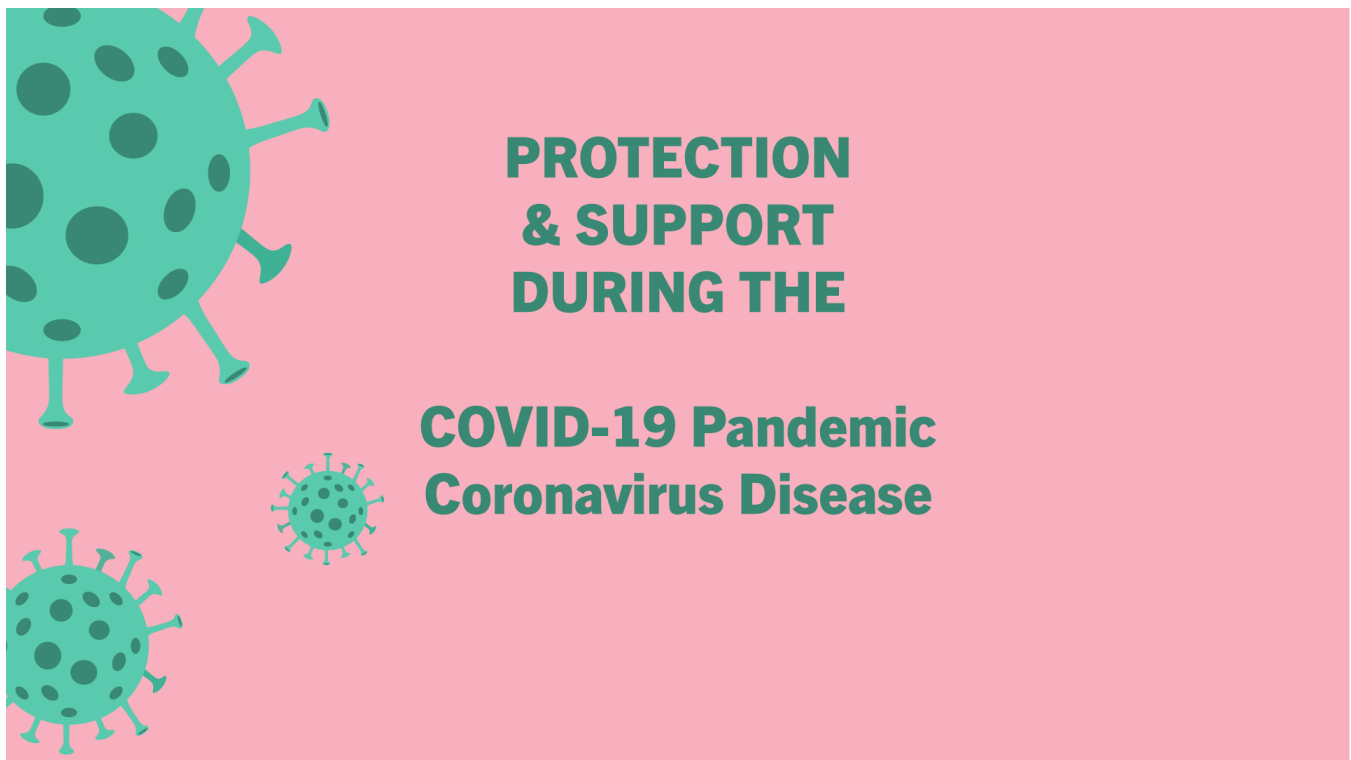


STATEMENT

Released: March 16, 2020

TO: ALL CUPE LOCAL UNIONS

CUPE members in Saskatchewan on the front-line of the COVID-19 pandemic have the support of their union



CUPE members work hard every day to deliver quality public services that our communities can rely on across Saskatchewan. We want to thank all members who are working on the front lines of the current coronavirus outbreak. At this time, we know that public services and the workers that deliver these services are more important than ever as we face a global pandemic. CUPE Local Unions and CUPE Saskatchewan have been monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic closely. The situation is evolving quickly, and we know that this is causing stress and confusion for our members as facility closures, school closures and service restrictions are being put in place in an attempt to curb the outbreak.

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We remind CUPE members and all workers that it is the responsibility of employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees, and that you have the right to refuse unsafe work. Your union's resources and expertise are available to help you. Contact your CUPE Local Union or area CUPE office should you have questions.

Your union is working hard to protect our members' rights and to advocate for our members' health and safety – as well as your economic stability and income security during this uncertain time. As such, CUPE Saskatchewan is calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately address the following issues to support public sector workers in the fight to curb the outbreak:

- Workers should not face loss of income due to quarantine or self-isolation measures, and incomes should be maintained for workers affected by temporary closures of schools, universities, child care centres and recreational facilities.
- All front-line workers need access to appropriate personal protective equipment, including N95 respirators.
- Workers who have to self-isolate due to illness, travel or compromised immunity should be able to access paid leave without using sick leave banks.
- Doctor note requirements by public-sector employers should be waived.
- With schools closing, the government needs to provide substantial financial assistance for parents who cannot afford alternative care or who need to miss work to care for a child.
- Legislation to protect the jobs of workers and waive the requirements for sick notes during the pandemic.
- Call on the federal government to expand access to Employment Insurance, increase benefit levels and reduce eligibility requirements.
- Instruct crown and municipal utilities, banks, landlords, credit card companies and financial institutions to extend and relax mortgage, rent and bill payment requirements, loan servicing obligations, and other responsibilities facing consumers and households.

If you are experiencing symptoms and recently travelled outside Canada or you were exposed to someone who has COVID-19, it is advised that you stay home and call HealthLine 811 for instructions. (If you are having technical issues with accessing HealthLine 811 by dialing 811, you can call 1-877-800-0002 to be connected with HealthLine 811. Deaf and hard of hearing residents can access HealthLine 811 by using the SaskTel Relay Operator service at 1-800-855-1155.) Do not go to an emergency room (ER) or clinic. If your symptoms worsen or you need immediate medical attention, call 911.

For the latest updates and resources, please use the following links:

- Government of Saskatchewan COVID-19 website for updates, resources and guidelines: www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus
- Government of Canada COVID-19 website: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html
- Employment Insurance (EI) Sickness Benefits: www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html
- CUPE will be posting updates as they become available on the CUPE National website at www.cupe.ca/search/COVID.

In solidarity,

Judy Henley
President, CUPE Saskatchewan

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