

**Subject:** COVID-19 Updates - July 23, 2020 - Bending the curve back down  
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**Attachments:** image001.png

## **Bending the Curve Back Down**

*“The BC Covid-19 curve is trending in a direction we do not want to go, and that is upwards. We all need to take a step back and look at the things we need to do to bend our curve back down...We have proven that we know how to do this, and now each of us needs to do our piece to make that happen.” – Dr. Bonnie Henry, July 22, 2020*

For the fourth day in a row, British Columbia had over 30 new cases of Covid-19, most of them linked to community outbreaks. While the numbers are still relatively low, the risk of those numbers surging is greater due to the number of contacts each of these new cases represents. There are now over 70 cases linked to the outbreaks in and around Kelowna in recent weeks, and over 1,000 British Columbians from every health authority self-isolating at home because they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive. Because of this, Dr. Henry is calling on all of us to continue to keep our bubbles small and limit our gatherings to those in our immediate circle as much as possible, both to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading the virus and to expedite contact tracing if it becomes necessary.

*“Contact tracing three or four people is much easier and faster than trying to reach 20 or 30 people.”*

We are pleased to see people getting back into more of their usual routines and enjoying the summer with family and friends. Having predictable routines, connecting with loved ones and getting out for fresh air and exercise each day are so very important for people’s physical and emotional well-being. Our teams are finding creative ways to ensure that everyone has these opportunities, whether it’s meeting up with a friend for a walk on the beach or going swimming at one of the newly opened city pools. We want everyone to have an enjoyable summer!

Dr. Henry made it clear we do not have to return to the level of restrictions that were in place a few months ago; however we do need to continue following the same guidelines to keep ourselves and others safe:

- Physical distancing
- Frequent hand-washing
- Outdoor gatherings instead of indoors whenever possible
- Use of face coverings when safe distance cannot be maintained

Spectrum will continue to follow the guidelines set by the provincial Health Officer and WorkSafe BC to ensure that the people we support and those who support them stay healthy and safe.

Thank you all for your cooperation and support.

Be Calm. Be Kind. Be Safe.

Susan Stanfield  
Director, Communications and Quality Assurance  
Spectrum Society for Community Living

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## Pandemic Income Supports for People with Disabilities

Our governments have offered a range of supports to citizens, including rent assistance, income supports and deferrals on taxes and hydro payments. They have also announced supports specifically for people with disabilities.

**The BC Government** has provided a \$300 per month Covid-19 Crisis Supplement to people who receive provincial disability benefits. This payment was added in April, May and June. In July, the government announced that it was extended two more months with payments of \$300 added in July and August. More information here:

- <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020SDPR0036-001223>

**The Canadian Government** just confirmed a one-time payment of \$600 for additional expenses that people with disabilities face during this pandemic. This payment will be made to people who are recipients of the following benefits:

- A Disability Tax Credit certificate provided by the Canada Revenue Agency;
- Canada Pension Plan disability benefit or Quebec Pension Plan disability benefit; and
- Disability supports provided by Veterans Affairs Canada.

Part of the announcement is that government has extended the eligibility for this one time payment for 60 days so if you have not got a Disability Tax Credit you can apply for it now. More info on the Disability Tax Credit here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/segments/tax-credits-deductions-persons-disabilities/disability-tax-credit.html>

And offers of assistance from [Inclusion BC](#) here:

## Applying for the Disability Tax Credit

If you or a loved one (adult or child) may be eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) but have not applied, now is a good time to do so, as it opens eligibility for several disability supports, including the new COVID-19 payment. Inclusion BC advocates can help connect you with community nonprofits who can guide you through the process. To reach an Inclusion BC advocate, email [advocacy@inclusionbc.org](mailto:advocacy@inclusionbc.org).

The Federal government is giving applicants an expanded 60-day window to apply for the DTC if they also want to be eligible for the 1-time \$600 federal COVID19 benefit.

## Pandemic Pay Update (from CSSEA)

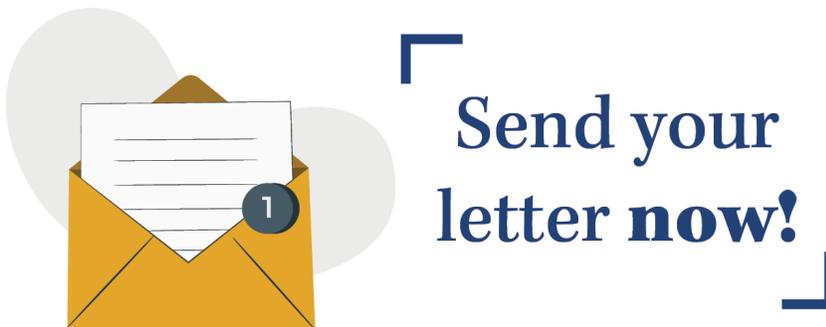
Provincial funders are currently working with the Ministry of Finance to create a streamlined approach for agencies to receive pandemic pay funding for eligible employees, and anticipate more details will be available by mid-August. In the meantime, employers are asked to begin gathering the following information for the period March 15 to July 4, 2020:

- The number of eligible employees. Details on eligibility can be found on CSSEA's June 4 [FAQs](#).
- Straight-time hours worked
- Excludes overtime and paid leaves (e.g. vacation, sick leave, education, etc.)
- All provincial funding sources/contracts linked to eligible front-line services

While we await further details from government, employers are encouraged to direct employees with questions on the program to this [website](#).

**The above information on pandemic pay points to a potential payment date for employees in September or October.**

## Equal Work Equal Pay BC – We need your Support!



**EQUAL Work**  
**EQUAL Pay**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Visit [www.equalpaybc.ca](http://www.equalpaybc.ca) to send a letter of support to your MLA.

Yes, the government provided the 3.5% increase for recruitment and retention to non-union agencies for April 2020, but this does not address the ongoing issue of **equal pay for equal work** in the community social services sector. There was a 3.35% increase in April 2019 that our non-union employees did not get. There is another increase scheduled for April 2021 that government has not committed to funding for non-union employees. Please go to the [www.equalpaybc.ca](http://www.equalpaybc.ca) website, click on the **Send Your Letter** link, and send a letter as an employee, or as a supporter (family, friends, self-advocates, neighbours!).

- Enter your address first, and your MLA will be selected from the data base.
- You can click PREVIEW to see how the letter will look
- Click "I accept the Privacy Policy"
- Click "SEND LETTER"

**There have already been over 900 letters!** submitted since our launch on Monday, so please support our front line workers and send a letter!

Let me know if you have any questions.

**Ernie Baatz**

Executive Director

Spectrum Society for Community Living

Express yourself. Build your network. Find your voice.

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**Be Calm, Be Kind, Be Safe**