

CITY OF HAMILTON

NOTICE OF MOTION

Board of Health : February 19, 2021

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. WILSON

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR

Call for Permanent Inclusion Of Paid Sick Leave Provisions Under The *Employment Standards Act*

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization and it has given rise to declarations of emergency under the Emergency Management and Civic Protection Act by the Government of Ontario, which declared a second a second provincial emergency as of January 12, 2021

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is spread from an infected person to a close contact by direct contact or when respiratory secretions from the infected person enter the eyes, nose or mouth of another person;

WHEREAS, the rapid and steep uptick in COVID-19 cases and the emergence of new variants of concern have been alarming;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the close interconnection between the economy and population health;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has revealed the need for policies to contain the epidemic effectively, prevent recurrent waves of infection and minimize mortality

WHEREAS, global climate change and mass movements of population will mean that the current novel pandemic is unlikely to be the last one we face and the policies we put in place now will also help prepare us for the next pandemic;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed stark deficiencies in various policies for protecting both workers and firms during crisis in which there is major disruption to employment

WHEREAS, places of work have been identified as increasingly significant drivers of COVID-19 transmission and outbreaks;

WHEREAS, there is increasing recognition of the importance of staying home when sick in order to prevent the transmission of infectious illnesses like COVID-19

WHEREAS, not everyone has the ability to stay home when sick due to fear of lost wages and differences in job security;

WHEREAS, employees attending work while sick can have a ripple effect at the workplace, including transmitting infectious diseases which will ultimately increase costs to employers and affect goods or service outputs;

WHEREAS, some of Hamilton's essential workers are precariously employed, limiting their ability to stay home when ill;

WHEREAS, on January 15, 2021, Ontario's Big City Mayors put out a news release stating that "too many workers across Ontario are having to choose between going to work sick or losing income" and urging the provincial and federal government "to implement a broader sick day program now that provides greater benefits and can be accessed by employees as quickly as possible";

WHEREAS, with the exception of a relatively small number of federally regulated industries, the majority of workplaces are provincially regulated, making it foremost the jurisdiction of provinces to ensure seamless access to paid sick leave for workers;

WHEREAS, despite these and other calls from public health experts and officials, the Government of Ontario has yet to announce measures that include paid sick days; and

WHEREAS, the Government of Ontario should reinstate guaranteed paid sick leave under the Employment Standards Act to ensure that workers do not have to choose between their livelihoods and following public health directives

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- (a) That correspondence be sent to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care endorsing the City of Hamilton's call for the permanent inclusion of paid sick leave provisions under the *Employment Standards Act* as a public health measure to prevent transmission of communicable diseases including COVID-19; and
- (b) That a copy of the correspondence be forwarded to local-area Member of Provincial Parliament.