

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Hamiltonians Need *Permanent* Paid Sick Leave - Council Correspondence

From: hamiltonalternativestopolicing@gmail.com

Sent: 2021-03-21 16:39:34.177

To: askcity@hamilton.ca; mayor@hamilton.ca

Subject: Hamiltonians Need *Permanent* Paid Sick Leave

Hamilton Health Workers for Alternatives to Policing (HHWAP)

Email: hamiltonalternativestopolicing@gmail.com

March 21, 2021

Hon. Fred Eisenberger (Mayor of Hamilton) and Hamilton City Council

Hamilton City Hall

2nd floor - 71 Main Street West

Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

Re: Permanent Paid Sick Leave as a Public Health Measure

Dear Mayor Eisenberger,

We write to you today as members of the Hamilton Health Workers for Alternatives to Policing (HHWAP) to urge the City of Hamilton to institute permanent paid sick leave as an essential measure against the further spread of COVID-19. HHWAP is a multidisciplinary collective of Hamiltonians working together to imagine and implement alternatives to policing in our city. Our vision as healthcare providers is to improve health for all and to ensure safety, equity, and justice for various communities in Hamilton. As a group centred on the wellbeing and longevity of our patients and fellow Hamiltonians, we are well aware of the intersection between public health, community safety, social justice, and economic security.

As highlighted in a report by the Decent Work & Health Network, paid sick leave needs to be universal, fully paid, accessible, adequate, and permanent. On February 24, 2021, the City of Hamilton put forward a motion to lobby the provincial and federal governments to give Ontario workers paid sick leave, under the *Employment Standards Act*. The motion was then amended to advocate for paid sick leaves only during the COVID-19 pandemic. We applaud Hamilton councillors for standing up for the wellbeing of workers, however, we want to emphasize the importance of making these changes permanent.

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 presents an imminent threat to the physical and mental health of Hamiltonians. However, we strongly believe that policy-makers at Hamilton City Council should consider how the pandemic presents a chance to make positive and long lasting change for the most vulnerable workers in our city, including those with lower wages, precarious employment, and marginalized identities (newcomers, women, and folks that are disabled, racialized, and LGBTQ2S+). Instituting permanent paid sick leave ensures the safety and health of Hamiltonians, which will benefit the city and its residents in the long run.

As a collective focused on health and justice, we know that establishing paid sick leave is critical for the essential workers that keep our city running. The Decent Work & Health Network reminds us that "paid sick days are within our reach." In this time of uncertainty, bold action in leadership is required. Anything less than universal, fully paid, accessible, adequate and permanent sick leave would only fail Hamiltonians.

Yours sincerely,

Kika Otiono and Gurinder Sandhu, MD Candidates

On behalf of HHWAP