



February 13, 2021

From: Robin Hood Association (RHA) Leadership Team

Updates

Dear RHA Membership, individuals, families, guardians, and staff,

We hope this message finds you all well, there are number of updates to share regarding:

Covid-19 Outbreak Site Status

After a very difficult last couple of months I am pleased to report that currently RHA has no active Covid-19 sites. Thank you to all the staff who have worked hard to ensure that safety protocols have been followed, increased their skills and awareness of proper PPE donning & doffing and enhanced cleaning and sanitization of sites. A special thanks to all the individuals in service and their families for the endurance they have shown, understanding of the restrictions imposed to help control any further spread of Covid-19.

Covid-19 Vaccinations

There continues to be a shortage of the vaccines available and no indication from AHS of the timelines to start immunizations. At this time RHA has only been advised that the first priority group to be eligible for vaccinations will be individuals who live in group living homes and Support Homes. Community and Social Services (CSS) continues to advocate that the broader disability service sector includes all persons with disabilities and the front line workers in the early roll out phases. This has yet to be provided.

In the meantime, RHA has been provided Covid-19 vaccination information and consent forms to have prepared, our list of eligible individuals will be sent to AHS.

RHA will be collecting approval from staff to provide their contact information to be shared with AHS. It is intended that AHS will be directly contacting staff to set up vaccination appointments when these become available.

Recognition Pay for Essential Support Workers

Community and Social Services (CSS) has provided RHA with a grant agreement in support of the federally-funded recognition pay program targeted towards essential support workers. The program aims to recognize workers who took on additional risks to provide uninterrupted critical services to people with disabilities throughout the pandemic.

Final grant agreement amounts were determined based on data collected in December 2020 from RHA.

In keeping with the spirit of this funding, CSS has received additional clarity on funding eligibility from the Federal Government as per the additional criteria below:

- Eligibility period of March 15, 2020 – July 4, 2020.

- Eligible staff members must still be employed with RHA and must have delivered front line services during the eligible period.
- Management staff and other non-front line staff are not in-scope for recognition pay, even if they temporarily worked on front line during the period of eligibility.
- Recognition pay cannot exceed 600 hours worked, or a total of \$1,200 per staff member.
- To prevent duplication of funding, eligible staff that have already received a wage top up on hours worked within this time frame, (ie. 7/7 top up hours RHA already paid out, funded by CSS) will not be eligible to receive additional funds on those hours again.

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, they wish to extend thanks and gratitude to RHA and staff for the dedication we have shown in supporting vulnerable Albertans during this challenging time.

NEW – Critical Worker Benefit (CWB)

Recently, the Government of Alberta announced the [Critical Worker Benefit](#). This benefit will provide a one-time lump sum payment of \$1200 to essential workers in a wide variety of private and public sectors, including disability workers. To be eligible for the benefit, workers must have worked a minimum of 300 hours during the period of October 12, 2020 to January 31, 2021.

This will provide funding for many employees whom RHA may not have had the flexibility to include in the initial grant (Recognition Pay for Essential Workers covering last March – July 2020 as identified above), or who fell outside the timeline. We are awaiting more details on the rollout and criteria of this new benefit and will share additional information as it becomes available.

We have shared feedback with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (CSS) regarding the challenges related to the initial grant. This includes challenges related to the lack of flexibility in the final grant conditions and various restrictions. We are hopeful that the Critical Worker Benefit will create more capacity to recognize a broader scope of RHA staff, as everyone in our RHA Team has been critical and essential to keep things running no matter what role they play.

Further information about the new benefit is available [here](#).

The Recognition Pay for Essential Workers and the Critical Worker Benefit are two separate programs. Staff may be eligible for both, only one, partial or not eligible at all. RHA has not received funds yet, or all the information we require to process these payments. Payroll will not be able to answer individual staff questions pertaining to their personal benefits at this time. We will provide more information as we receive it.

Announcement of Restructure for Community and Social Services

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (CSS) exists to support the social inclusion of Albertans, while making sure these supports are sustainable for future generations.

After completing an organizational review, a new structure was identified that encourages innovation and enables a more responsive approach to deliver services to Albertans. CSS has

moved from five divisions to four. The new divisions in CSS and their Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) are:

- *Employment and Financial Services: responsible for policy development and delivery of services related to employment and finances, such as Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped and Income Support. This division will be led by ADM Jason Chance.*
- *Disability Services: responsible for policy development and the delivery of services related to disability supports, including Family Support for Children with Disabilities and Persons with Developmental Disabilities. This division will be led by ADM Clay Buchanan.*
- *Strategic Services: mandate and name remains the same and will remain under the leadership of ADM Tracy Wyrstiuk. Strategic Services manages strategic policy development and policy integration, governance and appeals, analytics and data integration, and more.*
- *Preventive Community Services: mandate is also not changing. It will continue to focus on safety and preventive social services related to community support, homelessness and family violence prevention. It will be led by ADM Maryna Korchagina.*

CSS has also shifted the delivery system from six regions to two zones:

- *Edmonton, North West and North East Regions will become **the North Zone**.*
- *Central, Calgary and South Regions will become **the South Zone**.*

Employment and Financial Supports Division and the Disability Services Division will mirror this structure.

From a delivery system perspective - agency or individual – CSS does not anticipate much, if any change to existing contacts. Outcomes of these changes are intended to streamline policy, processes and consistency in service delivery across the province.

Stay safe,



Ann Marie LePan

Chief Executive Officer

[Robin Hood Association](#) | 141 Broadway Blvd, Sherwood Park, AB | T8H 2A4

P: 780-467-7140 ext 1225 | F: 780-449-2028

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)