

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington St.  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Workers and employers from across Canada breathed a collective sigh of relief at your announcement of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. As an employer in the charitable sector myself, I can tell you how urgently necessary these measures are, and how profoundly they are appreciated by Canada's business and non-profit communities.

At the same time, I must tell you that stakeholders from across the health sector are disquieted by the possibility that the program may exclude applications from Canada's health research community. Without equal access to these supports, Canada's research hospitals will be forced to lay off researchers and highly qualified personnel in droves. This would in-turn jeopardize Canada's capacity to contribute to the global research effort to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and impoverish Canada's health research potential for years to come.

Dr. Bradly Wouters, Executive Vice-President of University Health Network (UHN) was [recently interviewed by iPolitics](#) to describe what that might look like in his own institution. UHN is losing a projected \$6 million per month that currently employs 650 people, including clinical research associates and coordinators, research nurses, laboratory technicians, biostatisticians, data managers, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. As Dr. Wouters notes, that workforce can be redeployed to help carry out the clinical research that is so desperately needed in the time of COVID-19. Yet if health research staff are excluded from eligibility for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, there is every possibility that UHN will not be able to retain them. This same quandary is playing out in academic health sciences centres across the country.

HealthCareCAN and our members have lauded your government's commitment to mobilizing health research to combat the pandemic; a commitment exemplified best by the \$275 million your government has devoted to that cause. It would be a horrible outcome to see many researchers lose their jobs for want of access to a key federal program given the priority you have personally assigned to the role of researchers in our national response. I am certain that this is not the scenario that you and your Ministers are envisioning, and I am confident that you will act quickly to prevent it from coming to pass.

With all of this in mind, I appeal to you to ensure that health researchers are extended eligibility for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy when the program's criteria are unveiled later this week.

Yours sincerely,



Paul-Émile Cloutier  
President & CEO

Cc: Hon. Bill Morneau Minister of Finance for Canada

Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health for Canada

Hon. Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry for Canada

Mr. Paul Rochon, Deputy Minister of Finance for Canada

Dr. Stephen Lucas, Deputy Minister of Health for Canada

Mr. Simon Kennedy, Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry for Canada

Mr. Rob MacIsaac, Chair of the Board of Directors, HealthCareCAN; President and CEO, Hamilton Health Sciences