



## Federal wage subsidy

The federal government has provided additional details concerning the 75 per cent wage subsidy for businesses announced on Monday.

- Businesses can receive a wage subsidy equal to 75 per cent of the first \$58,700 of each employee's salary (up to \$874 per week per employee).
- There's no limit on the number of a business's employees that can be subsidized.
- To be eligible for the subsidy, businesses must have experienced a decrease in gross revenue of 30 per cent or more, compared to the same month the previous year (March 2019 vs March 2020).
- The subsidy is currently being made available for three months (March, April and May). The program may be extended if the government deems it necessary.
- Businesses will have to re-apply each month that they require the subsidy. That means they will need to show a drop in gross revenue of at least 30 per cent for each month compared to the same month in the previous year (March 2019 vs March 2020, April 2019 vs April 2020 and May 2019 vs May 2020).
- Businesses can apply for the subsidy through the Canada Revenue Agency's online platform and set up direct deposit. Funds are expected to be available within six weeks.
- The subsidy will be paid to the employer, which will in turn pay its staff. No direct payments to staff will be made.
- Employers will be required to attest that they are doing "everything they can" to pay the remaining 25 per cent of employee wages.
- The federal government has indicated that "stiff and severe" penalties will be in place for companies that try and take advantage of the program.

More information is still expected in the coming days. If you would like advice on how the availability of the wage subsidy might affect your practice, contact Darren Osborne ([dosborne@ovma.org](mailto:dosborne@ovma.org)) or Dr. Chris Doherty ([cdoherly@ovma.org](mailto:cdoherly@ovma.org)).

## A staff member may have been exposed to COVID-19. Now what?

### Scenario A – An employee falls ill.

*If the employee becomes ill:*

- The ill staff member should remain at home or immediately go home if the symptoms surface while at work. If the employee was at work, the clinic/office doesn't need to close, but remaining staff should sanitize all workspaces.
- The ill staff member is to contact their primary care physician or telehealth Ontario to determine if COVID-19 testing is required.
- If it's determined that the individual doesn't need to be tested for COVID-19, they are to remain at home until they are well.

- If the individual is tested for COVID-19 and tests positive, Public Health will notify the employer and provide next steps. A COVID-19 positive test doesn't automatically mean everyone in the clinic needs to self-isolate or is at risk—it will depend on the health practices and social distancing being done at the clinic. Public Health will evaluate and provide directives.

**Scenario B – An employee's spouse/partner or another family member who they're living with falls ill.**

- The staff member should remain at home.
- The staff member should seek direction from the primary care physician attending to the ill individual or telehealth Ontario.
- If COVID-19 testing is required, the staff member should self-isolate until results are received and further direction is provided by Public Health.
- If COVID-19 testing is not required and the employer wants the staff member to remain at home, they may ask the individual to do so, but the employer will be required to pay the individual's salary.

**Scenario C – An employee was somewhere (e.g. a grocery store) where a store employee later tested positive for COVID-19.**

- Having been in a facility where someone subsequently tests positive for COVID-19 doesn't automatically mean everyone who's been in proximity to the ill person needs to self-isolate or is at risk.
- Individuals who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 should contact their local Public Health Unit for more direction, as each situation will be unique and contact tracing may be required.
- Employers can ask exposed staff to remain at home, while being paid, and then contact Public Health for further direction.

In all three scenarios, employers can contact their local Public Health Unit for more direction if required.

[Find your local Public Health Unit.](#)

Use the Ontario Ministry of Health's [self-assessment tool](#).

For more information about COVID-19 testing and clearance criteria, see the Ministry of Health's [Quick Reference Sheet](#).

*This information is current as of April 1. As the situation evolves, further guidance will be provided.*

---

## Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

The federal government has announced a new benefit, the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), which will pay workers a flat rate of \$2,000 a month for up to four months if they have lost their job, are sick, quarantined, or taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19, or if they must stay home without pay to care for children who are sick or at home because of school and daycare closures. CERB will be available to permanent employees, as well as contract workers and self-employed individuals who wouldn't otherwise be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI). Benefits will be available for those who qualified as of March 15, and you'll be able to apply via an online portal, which will be available April 6. Those who apply for EI and qualify for CERB will automatically be moved to the CERB benefit.

To apply for CERB, go to [www.canada.ca/coronavirus-cerb](http://www.canada.ca/coronavirus-cerb). To receive your benefit as soon as possible, [set up your Canada Revenue Agency "My Account"](#) if you haven't previously done so.

---

## Employment insurance and veterinarians

OVMA has received numerous enquiries from veterinarians regarding Employment Insurance (EI). Whether you qualify for EI depends on your specific situation such as the regional rate of employment, and the number of hours worked in the last 52 weeks. [View details on eligibility criteria](#). To receive regular EI, you must have lost your job through no fault of your own (e.g. your employment was terminated, or you were laid off). You can also qualify for EI [sickness benefits](#) if you're unable to work because of illness or quarantine. If approved, the maximum amount of EI benefits you can receive is \$573 a week.

Applying for EI is more complicated if you have more than one employer, and members are encouraged to consider the impact of various options before deciding how to proceed. Here's an example showing how a veterinarian working part-time at two practices might be affected:

### EI example

Sara works at two practices: a primary care facility (Clinic A) where she works three shifts a week and earns \$54,000 a year, and an emergency hospital (Clinic B) where she works two shifts a week and earns \$36,000 a year, for a total annual income of \$90,000. Sara was laid off from Clinic A when an in-hospital COVID-19 outbreak forced the practice to close temporarily, so her income is now only \$36,000 a year. She has two options:

1. Ask if she can increase her hours at Clinic B to five shifts a week to get back to her normal income of \$90,000 a year.
2. Continue to work two shifts a week at Clinic B and apply for EI to replace part of the income lost at Clinic A.
  - o Her weekly earnings at Clinic A were \$1,038.46, so her weekly EI benefit rate is \$571.15 (55 per cent of \$1,038.46).\*
  - o Her two shifts at Clinic B earn her \$692.30 per week. As a result, her EI benefits are reduced by \$346.15 (50 cents for every dollar she earns at Clinic B). This brings her total EI benefit down to \$225 per week (\$571.15-\$346.15 = \$225). (Note: This applies as long as you don't earn more than 90 per cent of the average insurable earnings your benefit was based on. Any money you earn above that 90 per cent will be fully taken off your benefits.)

Her total income on an annual basis would now be \$47,700.

If she were subsequently laid off from Clinic B, she would receive the maximum EI amount of \$573 a week (\$29,796 a year or roughly \$2,483 per month).

*\*Assuming she has worked enough hours at a sufficient rate of pay to qualify for the maximum EI benefit.*

For more information on your particular circumstance or eligibility, contact Employment Insurance Canada via your Service Canada account or by phone at 1.800.206.7218.

*This information is current as of April 1.*

---

## Webinar: You Matter - Taking Care of Yourself During the Pandemic

OVMA will host a webinar featuring Dr. Colleen Best on Thursday, **April 9 at noon called You Matter -Taking Care of Yourself During the Pandemic**. The webinar is brought to you by Hills Pet Nutrition.

Whether you're working in clinic or isolated at home, the uncertainty and stress can be overwhelming. In this 45-minute webinar, Dr. Best will provide practical strategies and

tools for taking care of yourself and coping with the uncertainty of the pandemic. She'll share how to:

- Explore and practice techniques that help reduce worry and anxiety by focusing on the present.
- Address the value and importance of social connection and discuss tools that can support it in the current environment.
- Use gratitude to change your perspective, as well as to foster a sense of hope and safety.

Dr. Best, PhD, DVM, is a consultant and educator focused on non-technical competencies, including veterinarian-client communication, veterinary team performance, wellness and resilience. She's a certified compassion fatigue professional and is also trained in mental health first aid and suicide intervention.

For those who can't attend, the webinar will be recorded and made available to OVMA members.

[Join the webinar.](#) (password: 889462)

Join by iPhone one-tap:

Canada: +16475580588 (949848862#) or +17789072071 (949848862#)

Join by telephone (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

Canada: +1.647.558.0588 or +1.778.907.2071 or +1.438.809.7799 or +1.587.328.1099 or +1.647.374.4685

US: +1.312.626.6799 or +1.346.248.7799 or +1.646.558.8656 or +1.669.900.9128 or +1.253.215.8782 or +1.301.715.8592

Webinar ID: 949 848 862

## Submit Farley Foundation funding applications by email

To ensure applications are processed as quickly as possible, we're asking clinics to email completed Farley Foundation funding applications to Victoria Hickey at [vhickey@ovma.org](mailto:vhickey@ovma.org). **The foundation will not be accepting applications submitted by fax at this time.**



NewsHound e-newsletters provide timely veterinary news and updates. You're receiving this message because you're a member of the [Ontario Veterinary Medical Association](#).

© 2020 Ontario Veterinary Medical Association. All rights reserved.

### Our mailing address:

Ontario Veterinary Medical Association  
420 Bronte Street South, Suite 205  
Milton, ON, L9T 0H9

To unsubscribe, email [info@ovma.org](mailto:info@ovma.org) and write "Unsubscribe" in the subject line.