

PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE

April 23rd, 2020, 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Zoom Virtual Conferencing Meeting Notes

More than ever, people with disabilities need to come together as a unified group in society. How we support and help each other through crisis will strengthen us as a community and as individuals. We have all made a choice to live independently and this comes with additional challenges, but through unification people with disabilities can make a difference; each voice is important.

Next Meeting: May 29th, 2020
Time: 1:00pm to 3:30pm via ZOOM
RSVP: pathways@technologyforliving.org

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The goal of this meeting was to provide some tools and information, and support to help people navigate through these difficult times. The meeting was attended by approximately 75 people.

1. Facility Work

- a. On April 15th Adrian Dicks stated the following quote, “I wanted to acknowledge all persons with disabilities in the province so that they all understand that services and supports will be there for them and if they require acute care and services related to COVID 19 that their concerns are of significant importance both to people who work for people with disabilities and who work in the health care system in what is in this difficult time. We are focused on their concerns.”
- b. Order that workers cannot work for multiple facilities and the impact it has had for CSIL employees. On April 10th Bonnie Henry had clarified that if someone is working in multiple facilities, they can work for private employers in the community.
 - I. “It is your choice to allow the individual to continue working with you, it is your choice!”
- c. CSIL Employers report that facility workers are still being denied the ability to work for private employers
 - I. They are losing caregivers, and some CSIL Employers have only one caregiver left or are forced to use family members

2. Family Members: Ability for CSIL employers to be able to hire immediate family members during the pandemic for a 3-month period. You do not need written permission, just be able to report to your case manager.

- a. Participants requested clarity on hiring family members, and were reminded that the policy with the exceptions from the Ministry of Health can be found on the IFRC Website Pathways Tab. The document can be downloaded onto personal computers.
 - I. In response to the start and end date for the Right for Family Members to have the 3 month policy exception, Hilary Currie stated that the Province Health Officer released the exception on April 1st, 2020.
 - II. Paul Gauthier will initiate, from ACE Executives, a request for an extension near the end of May, 2020

3. Agencies: To temporarily suspend the requirements of prior approval of agencies for emergency staff for a 3-month period of time, you don't need permission, you may go ahead and do so.

4. Distribution of PPE

- a. In the area of PPE and access to supplies; The Ministry response, Health Authorities will be communicating with CSIL employers to try and send out PPE & supplies. Vancouver Coastal is phoning CSIL employers weekly. We are aware of one location who is receiving them a one-week supply, you must go every week; pick up is required
- b. Safe Care does not have a steady supply of products
- c. CSIL funding can cover/pay for PPE if you have a surplus. If you do not, you can apply for some funds to help.
- d. Health Authorities are nonresponsive or unsupportive when enquiries are made; they are not supporting people with disabilities in the community

- I. CSIL Employers are being denied PPE when they telephone case managers for support
- II. Interior Health directed one individual to complete an application for masks at Home Depot. They followed through, but to date had not received any response
 - I. Employer is struggling and has not received anything support.
- e. General consensus: It's not helpful when the Minister of Health does not address the peripheral needs of the community
 - I. Persons with disabilities are being neglected
- f. Recommended that CSIL Employers enclose a note of request for supplies when they send in their financial statements
 - I. Document your notes, by keeping a copy with the date.
- g. A comment was made that one of the CSIL Employers had been advised by the CEO of SafeCare, a non-profit organization, that if you are wanting personal protection equipment they are helping.
 - I. They have different codes:
 - 764 is for WorkSafeBC
 - 766 is the group home code
 - i. Payment is appreciated, but SafeCare is donating to those who are unable to pay
- h. Updates:
 - i. CSIL Member Chris Marks has been working with others to make bulk orders. He has been successful.
 - i. Update: Chris reports that he has had 5 people compile orders for face masks, hand sanitizers, face shields and gowns. Chris divided the order so that 2 of the orders could be delivered to Victoria, 1 to Parksville/Qualicum and 1 to Nanaimo.
 - ii. CSIL Member Roger Jones is offering to facilitate a group order for gloves, masks and gowns, etc with Cardinal Health Canada
 - i. Roger Jones : Cardinal Health Supply Examples

Secure-Gard® Surgical Mask

Catalogue Number
AT73035
In Stock
(Ships from Vancouver)
50 each/box
6 box/case
\$12.54 per unit

Polypropylene Knit Cuff Isolation Gown

Catalogue Number
ZCT5000
Size: M
Backordered. Est Ship 2020-05-07
(Ships from Vancouver)
10 each/pack
3 pack/case
\$181.02 per case

Insta-Gard® Surgical Mask, Vertical Tie, Without Fluid Resistance

Catalogue Number
 AT71235
 Colour: Blue
 In Stock
 (Ships from Vancouver)
 50 each/box
 6 box/case
 \$114.21 per case

Insta-Gard® Surgical Mask, Vertical Tie, with Eye shield

Catalogue Number
 AT74635
 In Stock
 (Ships from Vancouver)
 25 each/box
 4 box/case
 \$103.37 per case

- i. CSIL funding can cover/pay for PPE if you have a surplus. If you do not have a surplus you can apply to your Health Authority for additional funds to support your purchase
 - j. CSIL Employers report that Health Authorities are nonresponsive and unsupportive when enquiries are made
5. **Federal Disability Advisory Group:** A participant stated that MLA Carla Qualtrough had announced that she was forming a disability committee, but was concerned that to date she has not confirmed the group's formation.
- a. Update: On April 13, 2020 the Federal Government of Canada announced that Minister Qualtrough was overseeing accessibility issues, and she was appointed to an advisory group to take on the task.
 - i. The announcement was found here: <https://nationalpost.com/pmn/news-pmn/canada-news-pmn/federal-government-names-group-to-ensure-disabled-canadians-included-in-COVID-19-response>
 - ii. Federal Government Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/sr/srb.html?cdn=canada&st=s&num=10&langs=en&st1rt=1&s5bm3ts21rch=x&q=advisory+group+disability& charset =UTF-8&wb-srch-sub=>
6. **Hospital Support**
- a. Paul Gauthier Paul stated that the April 24th, Global news would be doing a newscast on issues surrounding caregivers not allowed in hospitals. Paul emphasized that our caregivers are essential workers and should be allowed in hospitals.
 - b. Comment: Minister Shane Simpson acknowledged that he would look into this issue of allowing caregivers to be let in to feed or care for clients. Such as in special cases when dealing with persons with Developmental disabilities. Pressure to be put forth around this issue
 - c. **Update:** On May 14th, Paul Gauthier, participated in The Early Edition with Stephen Quinn on CBC radio. Stephen Quinn is doing a monthly piece called "Access denied", produced by Cathy Browne, CBC Radio Producer and activist for people with disabilities. There were two segments on the May 14th, morning show; one with Paul Gauthier and Rebecca Pauls,

Executive Director of Plan, and a second segment with a response from Adrien Dix, Minister of Health.

- i. Minister of Health, Adrien Dix, will be introducing an updated policy which will specifically address the needs of people with disabilities when hospitalized which will clarify family and caregivers as essential workers.
- ii. He hopes to have that in place on Tuesday, May 19th, 2020

7. Federal Wage Top up

- a. Paul Gauthier stated that everyone's concerns are valid. We understand this to be the 1st wave of COVID-19, and a 2nd wave is predicted. Healthcare workers, and other workers deemed essential, are going to receive the increase. CSIL Employers need emergency funding as well; a community living funding increase is in place to allow facilities and agencies to increase during this time.
- b. People with disabilities need to do what they must do to keep their caregivers, and if you have a surplus use it. Health Authorities must work with you at least for 2 weeks, but CSIL employers are not being given any access to funds. CSIL Employers need that kind of funding.
- c. Community living BC funding is getting 36 million dollars of funding and dollars need to be given to CSIL employers as well.
- d. If CSIL Employers do not have enough surplus to increase wages the Health Authorities may provide funding, and Employers will have to apply.
 - i. When applying, remember to use the correct terminology in your documentation, ie. "going into isolation", "reasons related to COVID-19".
 - ii. Paul Gauthier stated that CSIL Employers will not have to pay the funds back to the Health Authority.
- e. **Update:** On behalf of the ACE Executives, Paul Gauthier emailed the Ministry of Health regarding the wage subsidy allotted for essential workers during COVID 19.

In his email, Paul informed the Ministry that ACE has received many messages of concern from CSIL employers advising that their essential workers are considering other employment opportunities, or in fact have already moved on to other opportunities, because CSIL employers have not been able to compete with the current hourly rate top up being offered by agencies and facilities.

When wage subsidies can go to low income workers identified as essential, like janitors of nursing homes, people stocking shelves in grocery stores, working in food processing plants and other workers who are members of marginalized communities, because they are workers who have had to keep going to work every day to ensure food supply chains remain intact and health facilities can continue to operate, then logically speaking the wage subsidy should also be provided to essential workers who are employed by people with disabilities so that they too, can continue in good health.

He further stated with respect, the Ministry is well aware of the amazing work that frontline caregivers are providing to CSIL employers in the community. Without having these caregivers available, people with disabilities are at risk of losing vital care that is required to allow them to continue to remain safe in their communities. Due to high needs, without care in their homes, they are fearful they will need to be hospitalized to receive care during the COVID-19

pandemic and this will not only compromise their safety, but create additional burdens on an already fatigued health care system.

He has requested a timely response at their earliest convenience, and we will update everyone when the Ministry responds.

8. Triage: Michelle Hewitt

- a. Two or three calls made to the ministry regarding triage; all people must get access to treatment.
- b. Ethical treatment for all is on the line, all lives are valid.
- c. They are essential services from the Accessibility Secretariat.
 - I. CPPD are not receiving extra funding and people receiving PWD are getting \$300/month
 - II. Committee should be formed to look at issues of persons with disabilities i.e., money/PPE -one place to go for resources
 - III. Services are being given out by label rather than need and this is of great concern to PWD
 - IV. Homeless people in shelters need help and so the govt is working on assisting people whose issues have been already established for a long time
 - V. Average disabled persons would never get their issues addressed, it's a drip, drip, drip affect of submitting questions until they are answered.
- d. Paul Gauthier stated that the letter which DABC wrote was a major catalyst as it put people with disabilities on the agenda. He recommends that Community Living, ACE and CSIL Employers should request to convene a task force to ensure home support caregivers are viewed as essential workers to make sure PWD have emergency support.

9. Transportation

- a. On April 17, 2020 Paul Gauthier sent an open letter to Mayor Jonathan Cote, New Westminster, urging the Mayor's Council to make transit part of the essential services. This would allow essential workers to get to work
 - i. To date he has not received a response from either Mayor Cote or any member of the Mayor's Council
 - ii. Update: On May 8, 2020 Translink made a statement on their website as follows:

*"Province and TransLink to ensure transit service in place to support B.C.'s Restart Plan
May 08, 2020*

TransLink to suspend planned service reductions, rescind employee layoffs

NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. – People in Metro Vancouver can rest assured that they will be able to get back to work as the Province of B.C. and TransLink announced their commitment to ensure transit service is available as British Columbians safely restart the province and its economy in the coming weeks and months.

The Province and TransLink are working on a comprehensive solution to address the major financial impacts that TransLink, like many transit agencies across the country, has incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the progress in these discussions, TransLink and its operating companies will suspend the service reductions planned to begin on May 18 and rescind layoff notices issued to approximately 1,500 employees. The Province and TransLink will also continue to call on the federal government for a national solution to the challenges facing transit systems.

With the release of British Columbia's Restart Plan, TransLink will review all transit service levels to ensure it is balancing the need to help people get around the region, with the need to maintain and respect enhanced safety protocols. Further service and safety-related announcements will be made in due course.

QUOTES

Selina Robinson, Minister for Municipal Affairs and Housing

"As we begin to restore the economy through BC's Restart Plan, services like TransLink will be key to British Columbia's transition and recovery success. We remain committed to working with and supporting TransLink through this difficult time and into recovery to find solutions that will benefit Metro Vancouver and British Columbia as a whole and continue to call on the federal government to join us in this support."

Jonathan X. Coté, Chair of the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation

"Today's commitment by the Province of B.C. to help TransLink keep transit service running on Day 1 of the BC Restart Plan is an important first step towards returning TransLink to financial sustainability in the long-term. I look forward to working with Minister Robinson and her team through the summer to address the pandemic's impacts on TransLink finances so that TransLink is equipped to help rebuild our region's sustainable, innovative economy."

Kevin Desmond, TransLink CEO

"This is another important step forward for re-starting British Columbia and Metro Vancouver's economy. The transit service provided by TransLink is essential to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in our region. We will be ready to provide safe, reliable transit service as people return to work. We are proud to be partnering with the Province of B.C. to ensure transit service is there as the economy recovers."

- b. Participant commented that they received new information from Vancouver City Hall which stated that if people with disabilities were no longer able to get to their regular routes, too far etc, to telephone the Handydart phone number, Press #, Press 4 to register. Just give them your name and it's about a one-day return call to register for Handydart services.

10. Vancouver Coastal Health 2020 Contract

a. Section 23 – Acting Reasonably and Approvals

- i. *"Where this agreement permits, allows or requires us to make a decision, provides us with an option to act or refrain from acting, approve or reject any request, submission or other item or any variation of those requirements, that decision, option or other action **will be undertaken at our sole discretion and will not require us to act reasonably.....**"*

1. Paul Gauthier stated that this removes the right of CSIL employers, it is shocking to have that in our contracts! We are asking the Ministry of Health Authorities to remove this from our contracts and investigate this
- b. **“12.2 Your responsibilities during reviews, audits and investigations..... (**
1. **c) upon request and at a mutually agreed time, arranging access to all sites at which the Services are delivered, Care Providers and other persons involved in the performance or administration of the Services”**
 1. Paul Gauthier stated that this clause allows the Health Authority to communicate directly with CSIL Employer’s staff during an audit. We want clarification
- c. Update:
- “On the matter of the Vancouver Coastal Health 2020 Contract, with respect to the following provisions, in which an email was sent to the Ministry of Health and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority by the ACE Executives.*

“23. Acting Reasonable and Approvals

*Where this agreement permits, allows or requires us to make a decision, provides us with an option to act or refrain from acting, approve or reject any request, submission or other item or any variation of those requirements, that decision, option or other action **will be undertaken at our sole discretion and will not require us to act reasonably.....**”*

“12.2 Your responsibilities during reviews, audits and investigations.....

(c) upon request and at a mutually agreed time, arranging access to all sites at which the Services are delivered, Care Providers and other persons involved in the performance or administration of the Services”

On behalf of the ACE Executives, Ken Kramer emailed the Ministry of Health and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, stating that they are deeply troubled by the prospect of VCHA having the ability to act "unreasonably" in exercising its discretionary powers pursuant to the provisions of Clause 23 of the Contract.

He stated further that it is their belief that this provision attempts to remove the rights of employers, while allowing the VCHA the authority to exercise discretionary authority without respecting the financial and medical rights of the CSIL Employers. Additionally, it was conveyed to all parties that the ACE Executives found it disconcerting that VCHA sees legal validity in including such a clause that absolves themselves of reasonable action and accordingly, and they question its contractual validity and enforceability.

Additionally, while the Contract is littered throughout with content confirming that the CSIL Employer has ultimate responsibility for their employees and that VCHA bears no responsibility in the context of this employment relationship, Ken stated they were concerned by the intent and purpose of Clause 12.2 (c), which is cloaked under the provisions of "reviews, audit, and investigations" and asked what is the purpose of having access to CSIL employees in such a "review, audit, and/or investigation", if CSIL employers are ultimately responsible for the management and administration of its employees?

Allowing VCHA oversight and access to CSIL employees, is not only confusing for the employees but contrary to VCHA's role in not having employment responsibility for our employees. There

are also significant privacy related issues that CSIL employers must be mindful of with respect to permitting VCHA access and communications to CSIL employees.

The Executives also expressed that they were quite disappointed that this Contract was distributed without input from ACE given the prior collaboration as it relates to contractual discussions. ACE would've expected an opportunity to engage in clear, open and transparent discussion prior to VCHA distributing this document to CSIL membership. The fact that VCHA has distributed this contract to CSIL membership without dialogue is deeply concerning and contrary to the positive collaborative environment they are trying to create.

This email went to the MOH and the VCHA and when a response is received it shall be shared with CSIL Employers with immediacy.”

- i. When a response has been received by the ACE Executives, the information will be published on the CSIL-ACE Facebook page.

11. CSIL Funding

- a. As a result of the ACE Executives negotiations with the Ministry of Health, the CSIL hourly rate went up retroactively April 1st, 2019 by .63 cents amounting to \$32.74. If you have not received these funds, it should be deposited into your account shortly. P
 - i. Please note that these funds are not related to any COVID-19 initiatives.

Thank you everyone, for your attendance!