May 22, 2020

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of the Province of Ontario

Premier of Ontario

Legislative Building, Queen’s Park

Toronto ON M7A 1A1

**Re: Request for Clarification Regarding the Pandemic Pay Premium for Ontario’s Front Line Workers**

Dear Premier Ford,

I am reaching out to you on behalf of more than 30 homelessness service organizations that are members of the Toronto Shelter Network. The Toronto Shelter Network connects, supports, and advocates for Toronto’s emergency homeless shelters, respites, and 24-hour drop-ins.

On April 25, 2020, your government announced that workers who deliver essential services, including those working in homelessness settings, would be eligible for a $4 pandemic pay premium that would continue for 16 weeks. To date, details regarding the release of the pay increase have not been shared.

Homeless serving staff are putting themselves and their families at risk every day they go into work to support some of Ontario’s most vulnerable populations. In fact, not one of our member agencies have closed their doors during COVID-19, and not one hour of service delivery has been lost! We are extremely grateful and proud of the commitment demonstrated by our workers. Without their sustained effort and dedication, the COVID-19 situation in the homelessness system could be much worse.

The homelessness sector has long been underfunded and the average pay of workers is not reflective of their skills, dedication, and patience. We urgently request that information regarding the $4 wage increase be released as soon as possible. The long wait time has staff feeling anxious and confused and has put unnecessary pressure on our member agencies.

The Toronto Shelter Network and our member agencies are very appreciative of the leadership shown by the Provincial and Federal governments with the creation of the pandemic pay premium and your recognition of our collective role as essential service organizations. At this time we are requesting that information clarifying the roll out and implementation of the pandemic pay premium be released immediately.

Sincerely,

Sonja Nerad

Executive Lead

Toronto Shelter Network

cc: Minister Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board

Patricia Mueller, President, Toronto Shelter Network