



April 29, 2020

Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario,

Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health

Honourable Merrilee Fullerton
Minister of Long Term Care

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Elliott and Minister Fullerton,

On behalf of the members of Dietitians of Canada, we thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and the support provided to front-line healthcare workers. These supports, including the recent pandemic pay increases is highly valuable to those who continue to work across healthcare facilities to support our most vulnerable.

In the initial Pandemic Pay announcement over the weekend, it was noted that registered dietitians were omitted from the list of eligible front-line workers. We understand that additional professions have been added including respiratory therapists, pharmacists and paramedics. We fully support providing additional pay to those who are already the lowest paid essential workers within the system. I'm writing to you to request some clarification in hopes of better understanding why some essential healthcare professions have been included and not others. It is my goal to communicate the decision-making process to my members, helping them understand that they are a valued piece of the healthcare system.

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Working collaboratively in a variety of healthcare settings, dietitians are playing a crucial role in supporting the process to support screening, as well as patients with and without Covid-19. Dietitians are re-deployed, working long hours to support screening and triage of patients. Dietitians are being upskilled to support an influx of patients into intensive care units and are working diligently to support the feeding of vented patients. Dietitians are being re-deployed to support residents in LTC, and, in many hospitals, dietitians are supporting long term care patients who have been transitioned to their facilities to manage and control the current outbreaks in LTC.

Dietitians are providing essential services to Ontarians. We urge the government to please reconsider the list of eligible workers to support all front-line workers who are supporting the fight against Covid-19, and include the dietitians who are putting themselves and their families at risk on a daily basis.

I would be happy to speak with you directly about this matter and can be reached at the number below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Buccino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Jennifer Buccino MEd RD
Regional Executive Director, Ontario
Dietitians of Canada

