

## Health care workers triumph in fight for equal access to personal protective equipment

**April 9, 2020**

**TORONTO** —Unifor, working with a coalition of Ontario health care unions has succeeded in forcing the Ontario government to ensure health care workers within two meters of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient will have access to the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

“We are only going to flatten the curve and beat the COVID-19 pandemic if health care workers are provided adequate safety tools needed to safely do their jobs,” said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President. “We are relieved the Ford government listened to health care workers but this type of injustice should have never occurred in the first place. I am urging Premiers across the country to immediately implement similar measures.”

Today, the Ontario government revised “*Directive #5 for Hospitals within the meaning of the Public Hospitals Act*” to include all health care workers working at a hospital or long-term care facility to be able to perform a point of care assessment and, where there is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19, determine the appropriate PPE to utilize.

“Today’s victory brings a huge sigh of relief to health care workers in Ontario,” said Katha Fortier, Assistant to the National President responsible for health care. “Knowing they will be provided appropriate health and safety control measures such as N95 respirators and appropriate isolation gowns means health care workers can focus on providing the best quality of care to Ontarians.”

The revised directive will require hospitals and long-term care homes to continually assess their PPE inventory, provide training on correct usage and develop contingency plans in consultation with unions to ensure the safety of health care workers.

The revised directive also stipulates that retirement homes must take all reasonable steps to follow the required precautions outlined in the order.

“We will be closely monitoring retirement home employers to ensure similar protocols are taken to ensure the safety of workers and their elderly residents,” said Dias.

Unifor is Canada's largest union in the private sector and represents 315,000 workers in every major area of the economy. The union advocates for all working people and their rights, fights for equality and social justice in Canada and abroad, and strives to create progressive change for a better future.

Information about the union’s response to the pandemic, as well as resources for members can be found at [unifor.org/COVID19](https://unifor.org/COVID19).



For media inquiries or to arrange an interview with Jerry Dias via Skype or FaceTime, please contact Hamid Osman, Unifor National Communications Representative at [647-448-2823](tel:647-448-2823) (cell) or [hamid.osman@unifor.org](mailto:hamid.osman@unifor.org)