

January 15, 2021

Re: Agenda item HL.25.3 - Response to COVID-19- January 2021 Update

Dear Board of Health,

During the pandemic FoodShare has seen a massive increase in demand for our Good Food Box delivery service, including delivering more than 1,000,000 lbs. of produce through Emergency Good Food Boxes, which are free to the recipient, to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity who otherwise could not afford to purchase a box. While many employers have had to reduce the size of their staff teams during this public health crisis, our team working in food distribution quickly added 65 new employees in a two-week period to accommodate this jump in demand.

We could not do this essential work without our dedicated team of staff. And since we care deeply about their health and safety, and the safety of their families and communities, we introduced ten paid sick days for all employees, regardless of employment status, in 2020 and have provided an additional ten paid sick days in 2021. We also continue to pay a \$4/hour pandemic pay top-up for staff working outside of their home.

As you are aware, only 42% of workers in Canada currently have access to paid sick leave and that number drops to only 10% for low wage workers, many of whom have been deemed essential during this lockdown.

If a non-profit organization like ours can make this work, surely for-profit corporations can and should do the same. When left to make the choice themselves, many employers are choosing profits over people, choosing shareholder payouts over the health and safety of their staff.

The decision to provide adequate paid sick days to employees cannot be left up to the discretion of the employer.

FoodShare is in full support of the Medical Officer of Health's recommendation calling on the Provincial government to increase legislated permanent paid sick days and to ensure additional paid sick days are provided as a pandemic response measure.

Sincerely,



Paul M. Taylor
Executive Director



Crystal Sinclair
Chair, Board of Directors