

MAR 16 2020

Premier announces initial financial support, declares public health emergency

Premier Dennis King today announced an initial \$25 million Emergency Contingency Fund to support Island workers, including the self-employed, and small businesses who are affected by COVID-19.

“We know the decisions that we are making today as Cabinet and as a government are significant; however, we are making them with the best interests, health and safety of Islanders in mind,” said Premier King.

“Our three special executive council committees – Economy and Business Supports, Labour and Social Support, and Government Operations – are actively working to develop measures to address economic and community. I have invited the leader of the official opposition, Peter Bevan Baker, and the leader of the Third Party, Sonny Gallant, to join these committees.

This new Emergency Contingency Fund is a first step in our efforts to support Islanders as we get through this unprecedented event together.”

Several specific measures are being put in place as part of the province’s response to COVID-19 and were highlighted by several Cabinet Ministers. A highlight of measures currently being implemented include:

- Establishing a \$25 million COVID-19 Emergency Contingency Fund
- Establishing a toll-free number to assist employers in addressing their concerns and support needs
- Actively monitoring the supply chain impacts
- Exploring compensation plans for childcare staff
- Moving provincial government departments and agencies to essential services
- Cancelling all government initiated public consultation sessions

More details on these urgent actions being put in place will be shared with Islanders in the next 24-hours.

The Premier also confirmed that Cabinet met this afternoon and took steps to further empower the province’s Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Heather Morrison by declaring a state of public health emergency to ensure the province is taking all appropriate actions to prepare and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. Under the *Public Health Act*, a state of public health emergency has been declared for the province effective immediately.

While under a provincial state of emergency, the Chief Public Health Officer will be able to:

- order Islanders to refrain from attending any public gatherings;
- align resources to where they are needed most; and
- manage hospitals and other health care facilities and ambulance services.

Dr. Morrison indicated that she would be providing Islanders with more direction in the coming days about actions they should be taking.

“I want to thank all Islanders for their patience and for the role they are all playing in helping to flatten the curve and slow the spread of COVID-19. It is important that we continue to work together as that is how we will get through this unprecedented situation.

I encourage every Islander, whether you're a political leader, employer, or a leader of an organization that represents Islanders across our province, to continue following the advice of Dr. Morrison,” added Premier King.

Islanders with questions about COVID-19 should call PEI's toll-free information line at 1-800-958-6400. The information line is taking messages 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. Islanders who leave messages will receive a call back within 24-hours.

Islanders experiencing symptoms (cough, fever, or shortness of breath) within 14-days after international travel should call 8-1-1 to be screened and, if necessary, directed for testing. Those requiring immediate medical attentions should call 9-1-1.

Get answers to general questions about **COVID-19**

Backgrounder:

Emergency Measures Office response to COVID-19 provided by Minister Bloyce Thompson

Emergency Measures Office has activated to Level 2

- Working closely with Chief Public Health Office and providing support resources as needed
- Coordinating daily updates from every government department with respect to the activation of their business continuity plans
- Monitoring supply chains
- Addressing needs in communities and with most vulnerable populations

Economy and Business Supports in response to COVID-19 provided by Minister Matthew MacKay

- \$25 million Emergency Contingency Fund
- Establishing a toll-free support line for Island businesses: 1-866-222-1751. The toll-free support line will operate from 8:00am – 8:00pm daily, beginning March 17, 2020.

Education Supports in response to COVID-19 provided by Minister Brad Trivers

- Extending March break for public schools by an additional two weeks
- Closing licensed childcare centre starting March 17 for an indefinite period of time
- Exploring compensation plans for childcare staff
- Protocols and supports to address the impact on working parents/caregivers

Government Operations response to COVID-19 provided by Minister Steven Myers

- Directing department and agencies to move to essential services and identifying staff required to deliver these services
- Directing all provincial government employees who can work from home to do so for at least two weeks

- Providing special leave for those without access to childcare and for staff who are required to self-isolate
- Other measures include: cancelling public consultations, cancelling all non-essential travel, enhanced cleaning in all government-run building, and limiting public entry into public buildings

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Government of PEI
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Des subventions pour des groupes communautaires aideront à appuyer l'inclusion et le leadership pour les femmes #ipe
princeedwardisland.ca/fr/nouvelles/s...
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Government of PEI
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Grants for community groups will help support inclusion and leadership for women #peigovnewsrelease
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