



April 3, 2020

The Honourable Patty Hajdu – Minister of Health
The Honourable Ahmed Hussen - Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Re: Social Workers and Personal Protective Equipment

Dear Minister Hajdu and Minister Hussen,

As the national voice for social workers in Canada, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) is writing you today about an immediate and growing concern that social workers across Canada are performing essential services without access to personal protective equipment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, social workers across Canada are being asked to complete essential work – protecting children, managing immediate and chronic mental health issues, supporting isolated seniors, helping families experiencing trauma, working on integrated health teams and so many other essential roles that support social cohesion in this time of crisis.

CASW is writing to plead for the consideration of social workers, who are also placing their lives at risk, when contemplating decisions behind the allocation of Personal Protective Equipment to the provinces and territories.

CASW understands that the Premiers have agreed to consolidate the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment nationally to support diverting supplies to province and territories with the greatest need. In this regard, it is understood that the Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, is leading a special advisory committee to coordinate distribution. CASW urgently requests that social workers providing critical services be allocated appropriate Personal Protective Equipment in order to protect their lives while serving Canadians at risk during the pandemic.

As this crisis deepens, the health considerations of COVID-19 will be considerable. The compounding social consequences will have profound repercussions and Canada will need social workers to support the rebuilding of our families, communities and nation after the pandemic has abated.

Please support social workers now by giving them due consideration when distributing Personal Protective Equipment to areas of emerging crisis and need.

Sincerely,

Jan Christianson-Wood, MSW, RSW
President, CASW