

## 1. What is the COVID-19 Temporary Summer Locum Program Expansion (CTSLPE)?

The **COVID-19 Temporary Summer Locum Program Expansion (CTSLPE)** is a temporary expansion of the existing eligibility criteria and payment structure for emergency department physicians to access coverage incentives in the highest-need rural and northern hospitals in order to maintain 24/7 ED services and to facilitate the safe operation of emergency departments (EDs) province wide. This temporary expansion arises out of an agreement with the Ontario Medical Association.

## 2. Why has the Ministry introduced the CTSLPE?

The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges in recruiting physicians to staff ED in rural and northern Ontario. The work demands on physicians providing ED services over the past 15 months of the COVID pandemic have created significant fatigue and pent-up demand for vacation and family time.

This has led to an unprecedented reduction in the amount of coverage capacity available in rural and Northern hospitals both within local physician groups and broader locum networks. As a result, some rural and northern communities are at risk of experiencing time limited ED closures over the two summer months.

## 3. How long will CTSLPE remain operational?

The CTSLPE is time-limited program and became operational on **July 1, 2021 and will run through September 7, 2021.**

## 4. How do I know if my hospital is eligible to use CTSLPE?

Your hospital is eligible for CTSLPE if you operate a site that remains open 24/7 from July 1 to September 7 and are eligible for, or become eligible for, EDLP support OR You are an "RNPGA site" where there are demonstrated vacancies in their physician complement.

## 5. What constitutes a “demonstrated vacancy”?

In this case, a demonstrated vacancy is either a permanent vacancy in the physician complement or there is a temporary vacancy due to an emergency which poses a legitimate risk of closure.

## 6. How does a hospital access the CTSLPE?

An initial group of hospitals eligible for CTSLPE has been identified by the ministry, in collaboration with Ontario Health. These hospitals will be contacted by the ministry directly to outline further implementation details.

Other sites that fit the eligibility criteria can contact Ontario Health for further details about the program and for support in optimizing CTSLPE supports to help ensure 24/7 ED coverage. For all such inquiries and/or Recruitment Support please contact:

[PracticeOntario@OntarioHealth.ca](mailto:PracticeOntario@OntarioHealth.ca)

## 7. Which physicians can participate in the CTSLPE?

CTSLPE premiums are available to local physicians and locum physicians providing services independently from EDLP. Physicians who are otherwise eligible for ED coverage incentives can also receive CTSLPE premiums.

Unlike EDLP, the premium rate is applied to each and every hour of coverage provided by any physician at each eligible hospital provided except for hours paid under the Emergency Department Locum Program (EDLP) from July 1 to September 7, 2021.

Any participating physician must be able to be credentialed to work independently in the Emergency Department at one or more of the eligible sites to receive CTSLPE premiums.

Further information and support can also be obtained by contacting [PracticeOntario@OntarioHealth.ca](mailto:PracticeOntario@OntarioHealth.ca).

**8. My hospital already receives support from the EDLP. Do I have to stop using EDLP if I want to use this program?**

No. Eligible hospitals can continue to receive concurrent support from EDLP during this time period, however a physician cannot receive premiums from both EDLP and CTSLPE from the same day or shift.

**9. If both programs can be used at the same time, can an EDLP physician access this program?**

As per question 7 and 8 , a physician who normally provides services through the EDLP could provide services, but they would have to have an independent arrangement to provide services (i.e. not through the EDLP)

**10. My hospital and physician group have already worked hard to organize locum services for the summer. We're worried that this program will cause disruption. What if this program makes our locums cancel shifts with us?**

We know that in almost all cases, all pre-existing arrangements to provide locum services will be honoured when a new program is introduced. Furthermore, in the case of the RNPGA hospitals, there is a contractual obligation of the local physicians to ensure ED coverage.

However, if a locum does cancel a shift that was arranged for a physician's absence on or before July 1 for the period of July 1 through September 7 to cover a shift under the CTSLPE, the physician that was to be absent can opt to work those shifts/days and obtain the premium rate under the CTSLPE.

Alternatively, the hospital or physician group can organize a replacement locum who will also receive the premium rate provided that:

- a) The locum who cancels shifts between the period of July 1 and September 7 for a contracted physician's is going to serve a program under the CTSLPE; and
- b) The replacement locum cannot have themselves canceled shifts either in an RNPGA community or an existing EDLP site in order to carry out the new locum contract requirements.

In each case, the physician or the replacement locum would be eligible to receive the applicable CTSLPE premiums for the number of days that would have otherwise been provided by a locum.

## 11. What is the payment structure for CTSLPE?

Each eligible hospital is assigned to one of two payment eligibility tiers, reflecting service volumes and local scheduling practices. Payment will be made in alignment with that tier.

Lower volume sites where a single “day” of physician work can cover 24hrs are assigned to Tier 1. Those sites with higher volumes requiring two “days” of physician work to cover 24hrs are assigned to Tier 2.

The premium rate is applied to each and every hour of coverage provided by any physician at each eligible hospital provided except for hours paid under the Emergency Department Locum Program (EDLP) from July 1 to September. 7, 2021.

For clarity, the sites can also continue to receive concurrent support from EDLP during this time period, but a physician cannot receive premiums from both the EDLP and from CTSLPE for the same day/shift of work.

Tier	Criteria	Premium
Tier 1	2020-21 annual visits up to 8,999 annually	\$36.33/hour (based on \$871.92/per day @ 24 hours a day)
Tier 2	2020-21 annual visits 9,000+	\$72.66/hour (based on \$871.92/per day* @ 12 hours a day)

NOTE: Premiums are based on pre-existing RNPGE daily stipends of \$871.92

Local physician groups have discretion over how the total amount of CTSLPE incentive earned will be paid out in accordance with local needs and governance structures.

## 12. Reimbursement process

Under the CTSLPE, hospitals are responsible for reimbursement of physicians directly according to the program parameters set out in this agreement. Hospitals will then be reimbursed by the ministry (via the COVID-19 Incremental Expense process.)

## 13. Eligible Expenses

Physicians can claim payment for time taken to travel to a site to fulfil locum obligations under the CTSLPE as follows.

Travel Hours	Minimum Amount Claimed (1 Trip Either Way)	Maximum Amount Claimed (Return Trip)
2-4 hours of travel	\$300/trip	\$600/trip
Greater than 4 hours of travel	\$500/trip	\$1000/trip

Payment for travel related expenses such as meals, accommodation, airfare etc. would be covered by the hospital in accordance with any hospital policy and guidelines.

## 14. If my hospital is eligible for the program, am I ok to reach out to my local physician group or to other physicians to start organizing coverage?

As noted, in question 6, the ministry and Ontario Health will be in contact with an initial group of hospitals which have been identified by the ministry, in collaboration with Ontario Health. Once the ministry has made contact, you are able to start implementing the program for your site.

If you feel that you are eligible and have coverage issues, we advise you to contact Ontario Health at [PracticeOntario@OntarioHealth.ca](mailto:PracticeOntario@OntarioHealth.ca) for support in optimizing CTSLPE supports to help ensure 24/7 ED coverage.