

COVID-19 Temporary Summer Locum Program Expansion (CTSLPE)

Program Guide

Ministry of Health

Purpose

Through the COVID-19 Temporary Summer Locum Program Expansion (CTSLPE), Ontario will temporarily expand the eligibility criteria for emergency physician locums for rural and northern hospitals in order to facilitate the safe operation of emergency departments (EDs) province wide.

This guide outlines the considerations for hospitals to access and expenses associated with these expanded eligibility criteria.

Version

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Table of Contents

Overview.....	4
Hospital Eligibility.....	4
Physician Eligibility.....	6
Reimbursable Expenses.....	6
Reporting Requirements.....	7
Expense Submission	8

Overview

Commencing July 1, and through September 7, 2021, Ontario will temporarily expand the eligibility criteria and introduce a new payment structure for emergency department physicians to access coverage incentives in the highest-need rural and northern hospitals through the **COVID-19 Temporary Summer Locum Program Expansion (CTSLPE)**. CTSLPE will help maintain 24/7 emergency department (ED) services and facilitate the safe operation of EDs province wide. This temporary expansion arises out of an agreement with the Ontario Medical Association.

As a result, physicians will be able to claim a predetermined hourly premium for every hour they work in rural and northern emergency departments, consistent with the current Emergency Department Locum Program (EDLP) eligibility parameters and Rural Northern Physician Group Agreement daily stipend.

As per the eligibility requirements set out in the temporary agreement reached with the OMA and noted in this guide, these premiums will be paid to physicians via the hospital who requested their coverage through the COVID-19 Incremental Expense Claims process.

Hospital Eligibility

The CTSLPE is limited to those Emergency Department Alternate Funding Agreement (EDAFA) sites currently receiving support from EDLP as well as some RNPGA sites (RNPGAs are ineligible for EDLP support)

This means that eligibility to receive support from CTSLPE will be restricted to:

- 1) Sites that remain open 24/7 from July 1 to September 7 and are eligible for, or become eligible for, EDLP support;
- 2) Sites that remain open 24/7 from July 1 to September 7 and are RNPGA sites with demonstrated vacancies in their physician complement

A demonstrated vacancy is defined as a permanent vacancy or temporary vacancy temporary vacancy due to an emergency situation that poses a legitimate risk of closure. Further advice on what constitutes the risk of closure can be obtained by contacting Ontario Health at PracticeOntario@OntarioHealth.ca.

Previously Arranged Locum Coverage

Parties to an RNPGA agreement are still obliged to provide Emergency Department Coverage as set out in article 7.0 of that agreement. However, in the event that a previously arranged locum (one that was arranged on or before July 1) cancels shifts between the period of July 1 and September 7 for a contracted physician's absence in the period July 1 to September 7, due to the introduction of the CTSLPE, then that physician or a 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 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 a 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.

Payment Eligibility Tiers

Each eligible hospital will be assigned to one of two payment eligibility tiers, reflecting service volumes and local scheduling practices. Payment will be made in alignment with the designated tier. (see Eligible Expenses section for details).

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 meet the above listed criteria may contact Ontario Health to express an interest in accessing CTSLPE support.

Ontario Health is available to support hospitals in optimizing CTSLPE supports to help ensure 24/7 ED coverage. For Eligibility inquiries and/or Recruitment Support please contact: PracticeOntario@OntarioHealth.ca.

Physician Eligibility

Physicians 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.

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.

Reimbursable Expenses

Participating hospitals must maintain 24/7 ED operation when leveraging CTSLPE supports.

Expenses associated with premiums and travel time payments can be submitted for reimbursement through the COVID-19 Incremental Expenses process

Expenses must meet the criteria outlined below to be eligible for reimbursement.

CTSLPE Premiums

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

Hospitals can claim up to 24 hours per day for the full 68 days between July 1 and September 7.

The CTSLPE premiums are outlined in the table below and are based on pre-existing RNPGA daily stipends of \$871.92.

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

Table 1: CTSLPE Premiums

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)

Travel Related Expenses

Physician payment for travel time will be reimbursed at the rates outline in the table below.

Table 2: Physician Payment for Travel Time

Travel Hours	Minimum Amount Claimed (1 Trip, One-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

Other travel related expenses, e.g., meals, accommodations, airfare, etc., will be covered by the hospital in accordance with applicable hospital policy and guidelines.

Reporting Requirements

All eligible hospitals claiming expenses must report financial and program indicators as outlined in the COVID-19 Hospital Incremental Expenses Guidance Document.

The ministry may request additional information from participating hospitals for program monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Expense Submission

Expenses can be submitted for reimbursement through the COVID-19 incremental expenses process. Please refer to the COVID-19 Hospital Incremental Expenses Guidance Document for details.

Questions related to guiding principles for expenditure management can be emailed to Hospitals Branch at Hospitals.Branch-HSQFD@ontario.ca. Questions related to completing or submitting the Excel Template for COVID-19 Hospital Incremental Expenses can be emailed to AskHealthData@ontario.ca