

Communiqué

TO: All LHIN Funded Health Service Providers

FROM: Zeynep Danis, Vice President, Finance & Corporate Services, Ontario Health West

RE: Extension Approach to Service Accountability Agreements

As announced earlier this year, the 2019/20 Service Accountability Agreements (SAAs) were extended from April 1 to June 30, 2020 to allow additional time to develop and negotiate new service, financial and performance commitments for the remainder of the fiscal year. Further to this, and considering the current COVID-19 environment, Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and Ontario Health (OH) have received Ministry of Health (MOH) endorsement to continue with the extension of the 2020/21 fiscal year SAA for the period of July 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

We recognize that in these extraordinary COVID-19 times, there are many challenges to the health system and health service providers' current operating capacity and uncertainty. Likewise, it is not realistic to press ahead and engage in a SAA refresh process that would further pressure health service providers and the system as a whole, knowing that the SAA renewal processes requires significant resources and time to outline operational assumptions, complete planning submissions, undertake a review and negotiation process, and attain necessary approvals.

Taking all of these factors into consideration, the **2020/21 SAAs will be extended with an amending agreement that will keep existing schedules intact for the remainder of the 2020/21 fiscal year, until ending March 31, 2021**. This approach will enable LHINs/OH regions and health service providers to effectively streamline the execution of the agreements for the July 1st milestone. Our goal is to enact as simple and straightforward process as reasonably possible to put the 2020/21 agreements in place.

We know that COVID-19 has impacted providers in different ways and that most of you are facing performance constraints. The SAAs contain a clause that permits partners to collaborate and act reasonably in exercising some flexibility on performance obligations and oversight in exceptional circumstances. Effective communication between the partners will be critical in navigating the agreements in the year ahead. We encourage you to continue to work with your regional partners to keep the lines of communication open and flag any issues you might be having.

Thank you for your work in pandemic planning and implementation, as well as continuing to help meet the health and wellness needs of Ontarians. We will be back in touch with you shortly to confirm next steps and important dates.