

To: All Users
From: Maura McKinnon, Chief Human Resource Officer
cc: Erin Arsenault, Regional Director Workforce Relations
Date: May 1, 2020
Re: **Bulletin #35a – COVID-19 – HR Update – May 1 2020**

Vacation Requests

Horizon's employees have gone above and beyond for the past several weeks to ensure that we could address the challenges associated with COVID-19.

These employees worked long hours, were redeployed, and did what they could to keep their departments running and responsive to the needs of those they support. We recognize that many employees are tired and are in need of a break.

During Horizon's response to the pandemic event, we have had to review our policies originally developed for more "business as usual" circumstances. We also had to discuss with our unions which collective agreement articles would need to be relaxed.

As a result, we have adapted the application of certain policies and processes to provide flexibility and support to employees and the organization.

Vacation is intended to provide periods of rest from work. As a norm, Horizon encourages its employees to take vacation time every year. Timely and regular use of vacation promotes work-life balance and is beneficial to our well-being, stress and overall health.

As normal practice, managers approve vacation requests submitted via the annual process based on seniority and operational requirements. Horizon, working with its unions, opted to delay the April vacation process to allow employees and managers to focus on the initial pandemic response.

We know, however, that vacation time is crucial to our employees and knowledge of when time off can be provided is in and of itself valuable to our mental health and well-

being. Given how hard our staff have been working, time off this year is even more important than it has been in past years.

In consultation with our partners, Horizon will be asking employees to provide their vacation requests, in accordance with the standard annual vacation request process, to their managers between May 1 and June 15, 2020 for members of New Brunswick Union – Specialized Health Care Professionals, between May 1 and May 30 for members of New Brunswick Union – Medical Science Professionals, and between May 1 and May 31, 2020 for members of the New Brunswick Nurses Union and Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1252. Managers will then have until June 30, 2020 to review and post the vacation calendar for 2020-2021.

Non-bargaining will submit their vacation requests for 2020-2021 in accordance with their unit/department's normal practices.

Also, please note that scheduled vacations for May and June will be honoured where operational requirements permit. Vacations cancelled, or denied, during the 2019-2020 vacation year due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be automatically carried over to the 2020-2021 vacation year. For greater clarity, such employees will not be required to request permission to carry over such vacation entitlement.

We are hopeful that our continued efforts to “flatten the curve” will have a positive outcome and that we could see some relief in the summer months. However, it is important to realize that Horizon may not be able to grant time off while the state of emergency and/or while elevated COVID-19 response efforts persist.

These potential impacts will be communicated to employees before the finalized vacation calendar is posted and those who have selected dates that could potentially be impacted will be given an opportunity to re-select.

We want to once again thank all of you for your efforts in helping Horizon respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.