



Almost two years have passed since the beginning of this pandemic. Our members have tackled 5 waves of COVID-19 and are now in the midst of a battle against Omicron. One thing has remained constant over these two years: the members of UCCO-SACC-CSN have been on the front lines of the struggle. While over 100,000 federal employees have benefited from teleworking, correctional officers are not so lucky. We are impacted by this virus more than any other sector of the federal public administration.

In the past two years, approximately 944 of our members have tested positive to the virus. At least one officer has died after contracting the virus on the job. The number of positive cases continues to climb. Several facilities are experiencing significant outbreaks, specific public health measures are being imposed on our members, and families have been separated over the holiday season. We continue to witness unprecedented forced overtime in every region, sometimes in excess of 16.5 consecutive hours. The sacrifices that UCCO-SACC-CSN members endured during the pandemic are extraordinary and deserve to be recognized now.

The provinces are rewarding the extra efforts of essential workers with various forms of premiums. The federal government, on the other hand, continues to turn a blind eye to the sacrifices made on the front lines by Canadian Correctional Officers. In early December, National President Jeff Wilkins sent letters to the newly elected Minister of Public Safety, the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance. He requested a meeting to discuss our members' top priorities, including hazard pay. To date, no response has been received.

It is time for our employer to do the right thing and recognize that those who serve Canadians on the front lines are at increased risk. Our members deserve recognition for the extra burden on their physical and mental health in the form of hazard pay. The National Mobilization Committee is developing an action plan to involve every member in our fight for this recognition. We want our voice to be heard loud and clear. This call can only achieve success if every member participates.

As we continue to see the number of cases increase in each of our regions, your Executive Committee would like to remind you that if you test positive for the virus as a result of transmission in the workplace, you have the right to file a workers' compensation claim with the CNESST in Quebec (and with the WCB in other provinces) for any time lost as a result of the quarantine. In addition, recognizing that the 699 policy has an unequal effect on those who report to work or work from home, we encourage members who are forced to be in quarantine using personal leave credits to talk to their local executive about filing a grievance. Nationally, your union is developing a policy grievance to challenge the unfair aspects of the employer's 699 policy on other pay leave. UCCO-SACC-CSN is organizing to take action, strike hard and be heard.

Minister Mendicino, Commissioner Kelly, it is time to show your respect by recognizing the added dangers your employees are facing as they continue to protect Canadians and ensure safety in our institutions.