

Council supports paid sick leave

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The Town of Shelburne has joined the fleet of municipalities calling on the provincial government to provide paid sick days to workers.

Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills brought forward a motion during their council meeting on Monday (April 26), which would see a letter written to Premier Doug Ford to request the immediate implementing of adequate sick days for workers to get tested, self-isolate, and follow all necessary COVID-19 control measures.

Too many of these workers simply cannot afford to take time off even when they are sick and may be exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. The fear of income loss and financial hardship are known barriers to compliance with COVID-19 control measures including testing and self-isolation. The current federal programs are inadequate and too time-consuming to meet the full needs of workers who require sick leave, read Mills motion.

Coun. Walter Benotto, spoke of the recent death of a 13-year-old girl in Brampton due to COVID-19, which was brought home by a family member who is an essential worker.

It's unfortunate that these people that are essential workers have to go to work, end up getting sick, and end up bringing it home to their family, he said.

I think the province has failed to step up and protect the essential worker that have to go out there. It's the worst thing in life that you have no choice because you can't afford to stay home.

The motion was supported unanimously by all councillors.

While a letter will be sent to Premier Ford, it will also be sent to MPP Sylvia Jones and MP Kyle Seebach.

On Wednesday (April 28), the Ontario government announced a temporary provincial program that will give up to three paid sick days to eligible full-time and part-time workers. The legislation will be introduced on Thursday and, if passed, will require employers to provide up to three paid sick days for workers who need time off due to COVID-19.

The program, which has been called the COVID-19 Worker Income Protection Benefit Program, will be administered by the WSIB, and require employers to provide employees with up to \$200 of pay a day.

The program will be retroactive to April 19 and will expire on Sept. 25.