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Pool access for people with disabilities needed

Provincial restrictions must immediately allow exemptions for people with disabilities wishing to use indoor municipal facilities for physical therapy or rehabilitation, says the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario.

?More than ever, people with disabilities have been treated like an after thought,? said Peter Stapper, Chair of CUPE Ontario's Workers with Disabilities committee. ?How can anyone justify not allowing people with neuromuscular disabilities, for instance, access to pools and to the aquatherapy they desperately need??

CUPE Ontario is calling on the province's Ministry of Health to immediately institute an exemption for access to municipal pools for people with disabilities who, without it, could experience detrimental and potentially irreversible health impacts.

?The second lockdown didn't sneak up on us,? said Fred Hahn, President of CUPE Ontario. ?The province had months to consult with people, to come up with a plan that would include and support everyone through a lockdown, and to clearly communicate the plan. It's time for Ford to listen: open up the pools and other indoor municipal facilities for people with disabilities who rely on them.?

?This just goes to show how important municipal services and the workers who provide them are to people in our communities,? said David Petten, Chair of CUPE Ontario's municipal sector. ?I know that municipal workers are prepared and proud to provide these kinds of supports. We just need to know that there are procedures and protocols in place, mandated by the province and followed by the municipality, that makes sure members have the protective equipment we need to provide these services safely, for us and for those who rely on them.?