

# A Message from Nate Horner MLA for Drumheller-Stettler

"The Province is in trying times to say the least, as we are dealing with an economic crisis, on top of the public health emergency that is, the Pandemic Covid-19. What you need to know is that your government is doing everything possible to protect your health and safety and your financial well-being during this time. We've announced measures of support for both employees and employers affected by this crisis and will announce more in the coming days and weeks. Go to [Alberta.ca/covid19](https://www.alberta.ca/covid19) to stay informed with up to date information. Wash your hands, practice social distancing, stay home if you are sick, look out for one another and especially our most vulnerable. We will get through this and then you will see the most robust stimulus package in the history of Alberta. So please stay safe, stay informed and thank-you, thank-you frontline health care workers and all essential service workers for all that you do."

There are programs, services and support being delivered by both federal and provincial government and links to help pursue those programs. Please reach out regarding any of these measures at 403-321-7720, [Drumheller-Stettler@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:Drumheller-Stettler@assembly.ab.ca) or 1-780-608-4600, [Damien.kurek@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Damien.kurek@parl.gc.ca)



The situation with Alberta's response to COVID-19 is rapidly evolving. The primary link to find out the most up to date info is:

<https://www.alberta.ca/covid19>

- All travelers returning from outside Canada should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.

If you develop symptoms – cough, fever or difficulty breathing – stay home and complete the online COVID-19 self-assessment and call 811, Do not go to the ER or doctor's office.

New public health measures are in place to limit the time Albertans spend in large crowds and crowded spaces:

- All events over 50 people should be cancelled
- Recreation and private entertainment facilities
- Sit-down restaurants and others can remain open at a lower capacity

All Albertans have a responsibility to help prevent the spread. Take steps to protect yourself and others:

- practice social distancing
- stay home and away from others if sick or in isolation
- practice good hygiene: wash hands often, cover coughs and sneezes, and avoid touching face
- monitor for symptoms: cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing
- take the COVID-19 self-assessment

Alberta Health Services has created the country's first online self-assessment tool to help determine whether you should be tested for COVID-19. You can complete the assessment for yourself or on behalf of someone else, if they are not able.

[https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-SelfAssessment.aspx?utm\\_source=COVID-19+FYidoctors+English+Email+List&utm\\_campaign=153b135cea-COVID-19-FYiEnglish&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_d762f16bf6-153b135cea-157460757](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-SelfAssessment.aspx?utm_source=COVID-19+FYidoctors+English+Email+List&utm_campaign=153b135cea-COVID-19-FYiEnglish&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d762f16bf6-153b135cea-157460757)

COVID-19 symptoms are similar to influenza and other respiratory illnesses.

- Common symptoms include: dry cough, fever or fatigue/extreme tiredness
- Symptom of serious illness include: difficulty breathing or pneumonia

If you have symptoms, like a dry cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing:

- stay home - do not go to an ER or clinic
- take the COVID-19 self-assessment
- call Health Link 811 for instructions and testing

The Alberta government will provide immediate funding and supportive measures to support local businesses, employers and employees.

## Corporate income tax changes

- Corporate income tax balances and instalment payments will be deferred from March 19 until August 31, 2020 to increase employers' access to cash so they can pay employees, address debts and continue operations.

## Utility payment deferral

- Residential, farm and small commercial customers can defer electricity and natural gas bill payments for the next 90 days to ensure no one will be cut off, regardless of the service provider.
- Call your utility provider directly to arrange for a 90-day deferral on all payments.

## Credit unions

- Business members should contact their credit union directly to work out a plan for their personal situation

## ATB Financial

- Small business customers can:
  - apply for a payment deferral on loans and lines of credit for up to 6 months
  - access additional working capital
- Other businesses and agriculture customers can access support on a one-on-one basis. Further solutions are being considered at this time

## Employment insurance benefits

Employees may consider applying for federal Employment Insurance benefits.

- Allows up to 15 weeks of assistance if a person cannot work due to medical reasons such as self-isolation or self-quarantine.
- The one-week waiting period for Employment Insurance benefits has been waived by the federal government.

## Job-protected leave

Changes to the Employment Standards Code will allow full and part-time employees to take 14 days of job-protected leave if they are:

- required to self-isolate
- caring for a child or dependent adult that is required to self-isolate

To be eligible, employees:

- will not be required to have a medical note
- do not need to have worked for an employer for 90 days

This leave covers the 14-day self-isolation period recommended by Alberta's chief medical officer. This leave may be extended if the advice of the chief medical officer changes.

The leave does not apply to self-employed individuals or contractors.

Please refer to <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-support-for-employers.aspx> for more information.

## Financial Resources for Individuals and Families

### Mortgage Payment Deferral

Canadians are eligible to receive up to a 6-month payment deferral for mortgages. Contact your bank for more information or to apply for deferred payments

### Income Tax Deadline Extended

The return filing due date has been deferred until June 1, 2020. All taxpayers are permitted to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts owing.

### Moratorium on Student Loan Payments

A six-month interest-free moratorium has been placed on the repayment of Canada Student Loans for all individuals currently in the process of repaying these loans.

### EI Sickness Benefit

The one-week waiting period for individuals in quarantine and the requirement to provide a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits, has been waived.

### Emergency Care Benefit

This benefit will provide up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks to workers taking care of a family member who is sick and parents required to stay home from work to care for children.

### Emergency Support Benefit

This benefit will offer support to workers, including self-employed Canadians, who are not eligible for EI and who are facing unemployment

### Increasing the Canada Child Benefit

The maximum annual Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payment amounts will be increased by \$300 per child beginning in May 2020.

### One-Time Additional GST Payment

The government will double the maximum annual GSTC payment amounts for the 2019-20 benefit year.

Please refer to <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html> for more information.