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Releases

Paid leave to get vaccinated a victory for workers and public health

(Unceded Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam territories — Vancouver, BC) The BC Federation of Labour welcomed today's announcement that the BC government will provide three hours of paid leave for workers to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The move follows regulations announced earlier this month that ensure job-protection for those getting the jab during work hours.

"Workers should not have to choose between getting the vaccine or losing their wage," said BCFED Secretary-Treasurer Sussanne Skidmore. "Today's announcement takes that choice off the table, removing a significant barrier to vaccination that low-income workers were facing."

COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated long existing inequities in the province. Lower-income workers —who are disproportionately women and racialized— are concentrated in sectors where they are much less likely to be able to work from home. These workers and their families are, consequently, more likely to be exposed to the deadly virus.

"Today, the government took a strong step to ensure workers can access vaccines," Skidmore added. "The next step must be to help workers stop the spread ?— for that, BC urgently needs paid sick leave so workers can do the safe thing and stay home when they feel sick."

According to recent data released by Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, workplaces are a growing sight of COVID-19 exposure.

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