



Essential Services Agreement

Member Consultation — The Good Samaritan Society
Paramedical Professional and Technical

Mill Woods Centre · Southgate Care Centre
Dr. Gerald Zetter Care Centre · GSS CHOICE Program

Master ESA agreed to July 23, 2026



PURPOSE

Why we're meeting today

This is a consultation, not a decision that has already been made. We want your input on how essential services would work at your site before anything is finalized.

Explain the essential services agreement

Walk through the Master Essential Services Agreement your bargaining committee reached with the Employer on July 23, 2026.

Review your duties

Look at the essential services duties proposed for each discipline at Mill Woods Centre and check them against the real work.

Hear from you

Identify what's missing, what's overstated, and what would genuinely endanger residents if it stopped.

Prepare Part B

Your feedback shapes the staffing plans — the numbers and classifications required on every shift.

What an Essential Services Agreement does

Under the Alberta Labour Relations Code, an ESA must be in place before the parties can proceed to formal mediation. It sets out the minimum services that continue so residents are not put at risk if job action becomes necessary.

It protects your right to strike

- The Employer acknowledges your right to withhold labour
- The Union acknowledges the Employer's right to lock out
- Applies only to the site or program where job action is in effect
- Covers rotating and partial job action too

It has two parts

- Part A — the Master Agreement: the rules that apply everywhere
- Part B — site staffing plans: which classifications and how many positions per shift
- Part A is agreed. Part B is what we build with you

It stays in force

- Remains in effect until a new collective agreement is ratified
- Can be amended at any time by agreement of both parties
- Creates no precedent for bargaining, grievances or workload disputes

No replacement workers

Section 3 is one of the strongest protections in the agreement. During job action at a site, the Employer shall not:

Let you work unless you're a DESW

Members on strike or locked out cannot be permitted to work unless designated.

Shift your work to other units

Work normally done by this bargaining unit cannot be assigned to members of other bargaining units.

Hire replacements

No additional persons or replacement workers may be brought in to do struck work.

Volunteers and contracted services

- Volunteers cannot be used to perform bargaining unit work, and contracted service scope cannot be increased beyond pre-dispute levels
- The Employer must give the Union a list of every volunteer expected to work during the dispute and where they normally volunteer

What counts as essential — and what doesn't

The determination is based on endangerment and immediate risk to life, personal safety or health — not on operational efficiency or service continuity alone.

What this means in practice

- "It would be inconvenient" is not the test — "someone could be harmed" is
- Routine, deferrable and administrative work is generally not essential
- Work that prevents immediate deterioration, injury or an unsafe discharge generally is
- Be specific: name the task, the risk, and how quickly harm would occur



How staffing plans get negotiated

Part B sets out the classifications and the total number of positions in each classification needed to deliver essential services over a seven-day period — and states plainly which services stop.

What the Employer must give us first

- Names, disciplines, FTE and status of employees at each home or program
- Normal hours of operation
- Whether staff are normally replaced during absences, and how
- How schedules and changes are communicated
- Existing schedules and anything else needed

What we do with it

- Confirm who has authority to negotiate and to sign the plans
- Agree what specific services are essential and continue
- Name the services that will not continue during job action
- Set the position counts, by classification, for every shift
- Amend by agreement whenever circumstances change

Who gets assigned to an essential shift

If three positions in a classification are essential for a shift and two qualified OOSEPs are available, only one DESW is assigned. OOSEPs count toward the required numbers.

Rules that protect members

- Only members who normally work at the home or program — and are oriented to it — may be assigned
- Casuals cannot be scheduled where capable, qualified regular employees are available
- If an OOSEP can't report, the Employer must first try another OOSEP before assigning a DESW

The ongoing meetings

- Parties meet on receipt of notice, and as often as needed after that
- Assignments cover a seven-day period at a time
- If job action runs past seven days, the parties meet by day six and weekly thereafter
- Acuity increases must be backed by clinical or operational evidence

Essential duties? — Social Work & Physical Therapy

SW

Social Work

- Needs analysis as indicated from the social work assessment, offering services to the identified needs
- Meet with clients to provide support with psychosocial issues
- Provide information on legal representation for financial and personal or healthcare decisions, and assist clients to complete the documents when requested
- Develop a discharge plan for clients who request or require alternative living arrangements and care services

PT

Physical Therapy

- Provide all the components of rehabilitation expected of a physical therapist
- Review treatment plans to ensure residents' needs are being met
- Organize referrals to external health providers and consult with internal interdisciplinary members
- Participate in admission and discharge processes and care conferences (notes only)

Essential duties? — OT & Recreation Therapy

OT

Occupational Therapy

- Identify and respond to safety issues with immediate action
- Provide a high level of all components of OT services specific to the program, including ADL assessment, seating and mobility, skin integrity, dysphagia, equipment recommendations and ordering, and splinting
- Complete assessments of clients and residents and develop care and treatment plans
- Monitor the activities of rehab aides and assistants
- Participate in admission and discharge processes and care conferences (notes only)

RT (Rec) Recreation Therapy

- Plan, develop, implement and evaluate therapeutic recreation programs, adapting programming to meet the therapeutic recreation needs of clients and residents
- Observe and record clients' participation, reactions and progress during therapeutic recreation programs, modifying treatment programs as required

Essential duties? — Respiratory & Dietitian Services

RT

Respiratory Therapy

- Assess residents with BIPAP, CPAP or LVR and any respiratory concern
- Download readings
- Change BIPAP and CPAP filters

RD

Registered Dietitians

- Assess urgent diet consults and concerns
- Prepare care conference notes
- Assess residents with weight loss or gain
- Communicate changes to residents' diets and snacks to food service staff

Current shifts vs. proposed essential shifts

Normal weekly staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
SW	4	0800-1615	31.0
PT	3	0700-1515	23.25
OT	3	0800-1615	23.25
RT (Rec)	3	0800-1615	23.25
RT (Resp)	2	0830-1645	15.5
RD (Diet)	1	0845-1645	7.75

Total weekly hours

124

Proposed essential staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
SW	3	0800-1530	21.0
PT	3	0800-1300	16.5
OT	3	0800-1300	16.5
RT (Rec)	3	0800-1530	21.0
RT (Resp)	2	0830-1645	15.5
RD (Diet)	1	0800-1300	5.5

Total weekly hours

96**77.4%**

of normal weekly hours kept as essential services

96 of 124 weekly hours. Six disciplines stay on site; four move to shorter days. Respiratory therapy is unchanged.

Current shifts vs. proposed essential shifts

Normal weekly staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
PT	5	0815-1630	38.75
Rec T	5	0845-1700	38.75
Diet	2	0800-1615	15.5
SW	4	0800-1615	31.0

Total weekly hours

124

Proposed essential staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
PT	3	0815-1630	23.25
Rec T	4	0845-1700	31.0
Diet	2	0800-1615	15.5
SW	3	0800-1615	23.25

Total weekly hours

93**75.0%**

of normal weekly hours kept as essential services

93 of 124 weekly hours. Shift lengths are unchanged here — the reduction comes entirely from fewer days per week for physical therapy and social work.

Current shifts vs. proposed essential shifts

Normal weekly staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
RT	3	0830-1645	23.25
OT	5	0800-1615	38.75
PT	5	0800-1615	38.75
TRec	5	0830-1530	37.5
Diet	4	0830-1645	31.0
SW	5	0800-1615	38.75

Total weekly hours

208

Proposed essential staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
RT	3	0830-1645	23.25
OT	4	0800-1615	31.0
PT	4	0800-1615	31.0
TRec	4	0830-1530	30.0
Diet	3	0830-1645	23.25
SW	4	0800-1615	31.0

Total weekly hours

169.5**81.5%****of normal weekly hours kept as essential services**

169.5 of 208 weekly hours. Highest essential coverage of the three sites. Shifts stay full length; only days drop.

Current shifts vs. proposed essential shifts

Normal weekly staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
PT	5	0830-1515	31.25
OT	5	0800-1615	38.75
SW	5	0800-1615	38.75
Rec Ther	5	0800-1615	38.75

Total weekly hours

147.5

Proposed essential staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
PT	5	1000-1400	20.0
OT	5	1000-1400	20.0
SW	5	0900-1500	30.0
Rec Ther	5	1000-1400	20.0

Total weekly hours

90

61.0%

of normal weekly hours kept as essential services

90 of 147.5 weekly hours. All four disciplines stay on site five days a week; the reduction comes from shorter daily shifts rather than fewer days.

Current shifts vs. proposed essential shifts

Normal weekly staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
Rec Ther	5	0800-1615	38.75
PT	5	0830-1515	31.25
SW	5	0900-1715	38.75
OT	3	0800-1615	23.25

Total weekly hours

132

Proposed essential staffing

Class	Days/wk	Shift	Wk hrs
Rec Ther	5	1000-1400	20.0
PT	5	1000-1400	20.0
SW	5	0900-1500	30.0
OT	3	1000-1400	12.0

Total weekly hours

82

62.1%

of normal weekly hours kept as essential services

82 of 132 weekly hours. Occupational therapy stays at three days a week; every discipline keeps its current days but moves to a shorter core shift.



NEXT STEPS

What we need from you

- Review the proposed duties for your discipline — is anything listed that **isn't** truly essential?
- Tell us what's missing that would put residents at real risk if it stopped
- Describe your normal staffing, coverage and call-in practices so Part B reflects reality
- Flag any site-specific concerns for Millwoods, Southgate, Dr. Gerald Zetter and the CHOICE Program
- Send your feedback to Marnie at Mstuart@hsaa.ca

What HSAA will do

- Negotiate the proposed staffing levels if necessary
- File the Essential Services Agreement so negotiations can move forward

Watch for your follow-up email

Next week you will receive an email from HSAA with the slides attached requesting your feedback on:

- the essential work that would continue, if any and
- on the staffing levels in the employer's plans.

Your input shapes what the union agrees to and how we move forward — please take the time to reply.

