

May 1, 2026

Dear Employer,

As of November 2025, new BC employment standards regulations introduced by the provincial government limit when employers can require sick notes. Under these changes, employers can no longer require a sick note for an employee's first two short-term health-related absences (five consecutive days or fewer) in a calendar year. This applies to all employees who are covered by the Employment Standards Act.

Physician representative organizations, including Doctors of BC, BC Family Doctors, Consultant Specialists of BC, and the BC College of Family Physicians, have long advocated for the elimination of routine sick notes, highlighting the time they take away from treating patients in need of medical care.

These changes are based on the expertise of health care professionals, including physicians, who cite scientific evidence showing that symptoms of most minor illnesses in adults, such as colds and influenza, usually resolve within five days and do not require medical treatment. Requiring employees to visit a clinic solely to obtain a sick note **does not improve recovery, but it does create unnecessary medical appointments.**

These unnecessary appointments take time away from patients who need urgent medical care, increase the risk of spreading communicable diseases, and add unnecessary costs and inconvenience for workers, such as transportation, childcare, and time away from work.

Limiting when a sick note is required also helps ensure that BC's physicians and allied health care professionals can focus on caring for their patients who need it most.

To learn more about these regulations, please visit the [BC Ministry of Labour's website](#).

Thank you for supporting this legislative change and helping ensure BC physicians and health care workers can spend less time on paperwork and more time delivering care to British Columbians.

*Doctors of BC
BC Family Doctors
Consultant Specialists of BC
BC College of Family Physicians*

