



# Backgrounder



## **Sick leave relief, overtime and constant care**

### **What is sick leave relief?**

Sick leave relief is the hours that are worked by an employee because another employee is off on sick leave. Central Health has implemented a practice of not automatically replacing the first sick call. Instead, the need for replacement is evaluated shift by shift to determine the level of replacement that is required. Additionally, Central Health has a comprehensive attendance management program.

### **What is overtime?**

Overtime is time that is worked over and above an employee's regular hours. These hours are paid at a rate which is based on the appropriate union agreement. Generally, the rate is time and half or double time. Overtime can be required for a number of reasons including a heavier than normal workload, any type of relief (including sick leave), unpredictable demands such as constant observation, etc.

Through our operational improvement process Central Health has reviewed overtime practices. The need for overtime is evaluated on a shift by shift basis and when overtime is deemed to be necessary, we are ensuring that the appropriate rates are paid as stipulated in union agreements. We are also paying very close attention to our overtime needs and wherever possible, trying to predict them in advance. Typically with enough notice, overtime can be paid at a lower rate (time and a half vs. double time).

### **What is constant observation?**

A patient under constant observation has one-on-one supervision; there is a care provider with them at all times. This type of care has to be medically warranted and approval is required prior to someone receiving constant observation. Constant observation is needed when, to be safe, a patient requires more than routine observation. For example, a patient who is very confused, at risk for falling, or could possibly hurt themselves, might require more attention.

Since Central Health started the process to make its operations more efficient, managers have been paying significantly more attention to the use of constant observation. Staff, managers and physicians contributed to a new constant observation policy. The policy allows for quality and safe care and has clear guidelines around who provides constant observation, when it is required and how long it should stay in place.