Did you know that most employers in Ontario have eliminated the requirement for sick notes for short-term illnesses?

While the Employment Standards Act permits employers to ask employees for medical notes when taking sick leave, it is not a requirement of the Act for employers to ask their employees to provide a medical note for absences lasting five days or less. In fact, other provinces have amended their legislation to prohibit employers from doing so.

Here’s why your organization should reconsider requiring sick notes:

- **Sick notes impact employee and economic productivity.** Many employees would rather go to work ill than spend the time and money getting a sick note, leading to illness spreading in the workplace.

- **Sick notes strain healthcare resources** and take time from patients who need urgent care. Patients should see a doctor only if they require medical care—most common illnesses can be managed at home.

- **Sick employees should stay home.** Travelling to a doctor's appointment or emergency department for a sick note hinders recovery and needlessly exposes vulnerable patients and healthcare providers to illness.

- Doctors rely on patient’s self-reporting of their illness and may not be able to verify it from a medical standpoint.

- Many patients are charged a fee for sick notes because OHIP does not compensate doctors for providing this non-medical service.

- **Some patients can't access a doctor during their illness.** There is a shortage of family doctors in Ontario. As a result, some patients are unable to get a timely appointment. Over 2 million Ontarians don’t have a family doctor at all, and must seek care (and sick notes) through walk-in clinics and emergency departments.