

April 21, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Preparations and Actions

The focus of today's Command Table, as well as the special meeting convened yesterday, was continued actions to enable the rapid implementation of the government's [COVID-19 Action Plan for Protecting Long-Term Care Homes](#). These include:

- **Enhance testing guidelines for long-term care homes** that include the following elements:
 - immediately testing all residents and staff in homes in outbreak or where residents and staff exhibit symptoms; and
 - beginning surveillance testing in homes with no symptomatic residents or staff. Further details on the implementation plan and timelines will be shared shortly.
- Daily reviews and **updates to the risk assessments** completed for every long-term care home in the province from both a public health and an operational perspective to ensure homes have the supports they need, when they need it. Based on these assessments, supports have already been deployed to homes, with a focus on **infection prevention and control resources, health human resources** to address staffing shortages and implement the enhanced testing direction and **personal protective equipment (PPE)** to protect front-line staff and residents.
- Comprehensive **recruitment initiatives** to expand the pool of health human resources willing and able to assist in long-term care homes, utilizing all available mechanisms including the [Ontario Health Workforce Matching Portal](#), the [Federal Human Resources Database](#) and through coordination with sector partners.
 - This includes **rapidly screening and matching resources to homes, and ensuring** all individuals matched to homes receive the training they need to support homes safely and effectively. In just one example, a single email communication to our pool of health human resources resulted in an offer of help from over 500 health care providers ready to go into long-term care homes in most need of help.

We continue to refine our implementation approach in real time, based on new data and through active engagement with long-term care homes and association partners. At the same time, we are focused on scaling these actions to protect vulnerable populations in retirement homes and other congregate care settings.

We thank you for responding to our government's call to protect long-term care home residents and staff in this time of great need. We will continue to work together to implement the wraparound supports needed to prevent further outbreaks and deaths from COVID-19 in our long-term care homes.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

Helen Angus
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Health

Dr. David Williams
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Ministry of Health

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