

May 19, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Preparations and Actions

In follow-up to our last communication, we are pleased to share additional updates from the provincial Health Command Table on key actions that are being taken to address COVID-19:

- Ongoing activities to support reopening the province, including the [announcement](#) today that Ontario has officially entered the first stage of its *Framework for Reopening the Province*. This includes:
 - Continued efforts to support **fast and efficient case and contact tracing**: As of May 18th, 90 per cent of new COVID-19 cases were successfully reached by local public health officials within 24 hours of being notified about the case. Many public health units are able to reach 100% of new cases within that time frame. The Ministry of Health and Public Health Ontario will continue to monitor and provide case and contact tracing supports to public health units, if needed.
 - Monitoring key public health indicators throughout stage one of recovery to track progress and respond quickly to any increased cases with targeted interventions such as testing, case and contact tracing, and infection prevention and control measures.
- Reviewing the implementation of the province's testing strategy, which was recently updated to include expanded testing criteria.
 - **Testing capacity will focus on three key areas: continuing routine testing already underway** in line with current expanded provincial guidance; **enhanced testing in areas where outbreaks have been identified** to ensure that capacity is being quickly deployed to address new outbreaks; and strategically targeting **asymptomatic surveillance**, informed by local risks, in order to understand the spread of infection and support the pandemic response.
 - Building on the **successful completion of testing for all residents of long-term care homes**, the testing strategy will ensure continued surveillance of long-term care homes, including further testing of staff in these homes.

- Ensuring **access to testing in Indigenous communities**. This includes enhancing the specimen transport network to improve testing turnaround times for northern and remote communities.
- The government announced an [independent commission into long-term care](#). This independent commission will provide guidance on how to improve the long-term care system and better protect residents and staff from any future outbreaks.

We thank you for your continued work to support the implementation of our provincial efforts to respond to the pandemic and plan for a phased recovery.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

Helen Angus
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Health

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

Matthew Anderson
President and CEO
Ontario Health