

February 10, 2021

**MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers**

**SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Planning and Actions**

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This week, the Health Coordination Table focused on the following key actions to enable Ontario's health care system to effectively respond to COVID-19:

- **Reviewing implementation progress of the six-point plan to stop the spread of new COVID-19 variants throughout the province.**
  - Mandatory airport testing of international travellers entering Ontario took effect on February 1, 2021. The province continues to work to enhance testing protocols for all incoming travellers and at land border crossings.
  - All positive COVID-19 samples are being screened for the variants of concern and sequencing of up to 10% of positive samples is underway.
  - Public health measures remain in effect in high risk regions and the variants of concern are being actively tracked through public health unit enhanced case and contact management.
  - The ministry is actively working to reinforce the most up to date IPAC recommendations in high risk settings and exploring new data opportunities to inform pandemic and public health related response efforts.
- **Monitoring implementation of the primary care-led model for treating COVID-19 patients at home**
  - The ministry is working in collaboration with primary care providers and Ontario Health to provide patients with COVID-19 the ability to be cared for at home while being closely monitored by a team of health professionals. The program has identified critical success factors for consideration in the implementation of this program across communities in Ontario.
  - The expansion of the program has been facilitated through the integration of daily monitoring of patients into EMR systems to provide live updates on a patient's status. In addition, the ministry has centrally procured additional resources (e.g. O2 Saturation Monitors) to address potential barriers to implementation.

- **Presentation of the most recent efforts in Long-Term Care to prevent, manage, and monitor the spread of COVID-19 in the sector.**
  - The Ministry of Long-Term Care provided insights into the lessons learned and current state of the pandemic response in the long-term care sector.
  - A progress update was provided on the vaccinations in long term care homes and preliminary data-driven assumptions around efficacy in the long-term care sector to date. Ontario is a leading jurisdiction in analyzing vaccine efficacy in this population and the group leading this research will return to the Health Coordination Table when further analysis is available.
- **Received progress report on the COVID-19 pandemic response within the retirement home sector.**
  - The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility is closely monitoring COVID-19 outbreaks across the province, reinforcing the implementation of policies to strengthen public health compliance, working closely with sector and government partners, expanding rapid antigen screening and testing, and continuing the roll out of vaccinations in the sector.
- **Reviewed most recent scientific data and modelling to inform advice to government on the ongoing pandemic response.**
  - The Science Advisory and Modelling Consensus Tables presented the latest COVID-19 case projections, trends and their expected impacts on public health and health system capacity.
  - Additionally, modelling of the projected impact of new variants of concern identified in the province was presented to the Table as well.

We thank you for your continued work to respond to the pandemic and implement 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  
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Ontario Health