

January 13, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Planning and Actions

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:

- **Expanding the use of rapid diagnostic and screening tests to targeted populations in long-term care, retirement homes, workplaces and schools and childcare centres.**
 - Rapid tests have been distributed for use in long-term care and retirement homes, with plans to further expand asymptomatic screening in these homes.
 - The Ministry of Health is working with other ministries and Ontario Health to implement rapid antigen screening tests and guidance in essential workplaces such as manufacturing, warehousing and food supply.
 - The Ministry of Health is also working with the federal government to implement a COVID-19 testing pilot at Pearson Airport. Since its launch on January 6, 2021, volumes of tests have ranged between 900-2,600 tests per day and are expected to increase in the coming weeks.
- **Continuing to open additional ICU and hospital beds across the province and enable innovative solutions to further expand hospital and critical care capacity.**
 - The Ministry of Health and Ontario Health are working with health system leaders to open beds in all existing unused spaces in hospitals, alternate health facilities and the community for critical and non-critical care patients. We are actively identifying and removing barriers to staffing and patient flow in order to safely expand health system capacity.
- **Planning to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine in long-term care and retirement homes to ensure residents remain protected.**
 - In addition to existing outbreak and prevention management measures, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care, and Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility are developing plans for continued COVID testing and monitoring of residents and staff who have been vaccinated.
 - The Science Advisory Table will collaborate with other scientists to examine disease incidence in long-term care homes during and following vaccine roll-out.

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
President and CEO
Ontario Health