

January 20, 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:

- **Begin planning to scale a pilot primary care-led model of care for COVID patients at home, in order to better serve appropriate patients and alleviate current and projected pressures on hospital capacity.**
 - The model provides care by a team of health professionals for people who have moderate COVID-19 and involves daily assessment, monitoring and decision-making in-person or virtually.
 - It was developed by the McMaster Family Health Team and piloted in Hamilton, with positive results.
 - The Primary Care Table will work with the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health to provide recommendations to the government on potential provincial expansion of this program.
- **Ongoing deployment of COVID-19 vaccines, rapid testing and enhanced infection prevention and control measures to protect residents and health care workers in long-term care and retirement homes.**
 - Long-term care and retirement homes continue to be prioritized for vaccination, testing and prevention efforts in order to contain and manage the spread of COVID-19 among our most vulnerable populations.
- **Ongoing focus on health workforce planning to address critical health human resource (HHR) gaps across the health care system.**
 - Programs to increase net new nursing capacity have been launched and are targeted to support acute care and ICU capacity.
 - Currently, the paramedic workforce has been deployed to support the coordinated provincial response to COVID-19, including through testing/swabbing, vaccination campaigns, supports to long-term care homes, inter-facility transfers, and community paramedicine programs. The Ministry of Health is identifying additional opportunities to increase the paramedic workforce capacity and prioritize their deployment to where they are needed most.
- **Reviewed the latest scientific data and evidence from the Science Advisory Table to inform advice to government on the ongoing pandemic response:**

- New evidence on the effectiveness of PCR testing to shorten the quarantine period after travel;
- Models designed to predict outbreaks of COVID-19 in long-term care homes can be used to predict the impact of vaccination on the number of cases and deaths under different vaccine scenarios. These findings support the government's vaccine distribution framework, which prioritizes long-term care home residents.

We thank you for your continued work to respond to the pandemic and implement a phased recovery.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

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