

April 15, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Action Plan for Protecting Long-Term Care Homes

Long-term care (LTC) homes in Ontario are facing unprecedented tragedy. In response, the government has launched the [COVID-19 Action Plan for Protecting Long-Term Care Homes](#). Through this plan, the Ontario government is committed to using every resource we have to support the province's LTC homes as we work to stop the spread of COVID-19. This plan includes the following immediate actions:

1. Aggressive Testing, Screening, and Surveillance

- Testing all symptomatic residents and staff. Additionally, for long-term care homes in outbreak, also test asymptomatic residents and staff who have been in contact with cases.
- Public health units conduct contact tracing for all cases in long-term care homes to ensure all contacts are identified and followed up, as well as to understand origins of the exposure.
- Working with public health units to implement broader surveillance activities to proactively stop the spread of the infection.

2. Managing Outbreaks and Spread of the Disease

- Supporting long-term care homes with Public Health and infection prevention and control (IPAC) expertise to contain existing outbreaks and prevent future outbreaks.
- Providing enhanced guidance to support homes on usage of personal protective equipment (PPE), including on what PPE to use in what circumstances, and continue to prioritize distribution of PPE to long-term care homes that are in need.
- A new emergency order to limit work sites for long-term care home employees.
- Training and education to support staff working in outbreak situations, including supporting staff with IPAC education and on use of PPE.

3. Growing our Heroic Long-Term Care Workforce

- Redeploying health care workers from areas in the health sector experiencing fewer patient volumes, including hospital and home care resources, into long-term care homes.
- Using the [job matching portal](#) to identify available resources for homes experiencing shortages.
- Providing emergency funding for hiring additional or replacement staff, or for topping up part-time workers to full-time hours, along with other options.
- Working with the federal government to determine how their recently announced initiative to top-up wages for essential health care workers can be used in Ontario to support our long-term care home staff.

We are getting the whole health system to stand behind our long-term care homes and support them through this crisis. Beyond the activities announced in the Action Plan, the government is also moving forward with the following additional measures:

- Public health units will be working with each individual long-term care home to assess immediate needs for support – for testing, outbreak management, or staffing.
- Asking hospitals to temporarily stop transferring hospital patients to long-term care and retirement homes, leveraging current capacity in the hospital sector.

Supporting those who care for our most vulnerable will require a whole-system response. We look to all partners across the health system to lend their support and collaboration to aid the government to advance this plan. Similar actions are also being undertaken for other vulnerable populations in congregate care settings.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

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