

Ministry of Long-Term Care

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Sept 11, 2020

TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees:

RE: COVID-19 Wave 2 Preparedness Results

Thank you for your continued commitment and collaboration in the fight against COVID-19.

Further to my July 31st memo, “Working Together for COVID-19 Wave 2 Preparedness”, I am writing to:

- 1) Update you on the preparedness assessment results, and
- 2) Remind you of Licensees’ requirements around ensuring a safe and secure environment for residents.

Long-Term Care Homes’ Preparedness Assessments

Thank you for conducting the preparedness assessment planning exercises. The results are expected to help homes with emergency preparedness and outbreak prevention and management and will further inform provincial and regional initiatives to support the sector through future COVID-19 waves. As the results are reviewed and analyzed, homes that have not completed the preparedness assessments or identified critical gaps will be contacted to determine required actions and timelines.

The preparedness assessments focused on the areas of human resources, infection, prevention and control (IPAC) and partnerships and sustained operations.

Results indicate that:

- Planning exercises helped strengthen regional and local partnerships across the homes and health system partners.
- Systemic staffing challenges and availability of health care professionals (including personal support workers) are key gaps.
- IPAC capacity and training requires ongoing focus and action.

I trust that each licensee is actively following up to address the gaps identified through this exercise and for those that are part of a chain are sharing and discussing these results with corporate offices.

Long-Term Care Homes’ Responsibilities around Ensuring a Safe and Secure Environment

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of your responsibilities pertaining to ensuring a safe and secure environment for your residents (s. 5, LTCHA).

Specifically, to effectively prevent and manage outbreaks, every licensee must ensure that there is:

- an infection prevention and control program for an LTC home (s. 86, LTCHA)
- an outbreak management system for detecting, managing, and controlling infectious disease outbreaks, including defined staff responsibilities, reporting protocols based on requirements under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, communication plans, and protocols for receiving and responding to health alerts
- a written plan for responding to infectious disease outbreaks (s. 229 of O. Reg. 79).

Licensees are also required to ensure that emergency plans are in place for the home that comply with the regulations, including:

- measures for dealing with emergencies
- procedures for evacuating and relocating the residents, and evacuating staff and others in case of an emergency (s. 230 of O. Reg. 79/10).

Licensees are also responsible for a staffing plan, in place and implemented, for its organized program of nursing services and organized program of personal support services (s. 31 of O. Reg. 79/10).

Based on the shared experience with regard to infection, prevention and control and staffing, the ministry will be implementing programs and supports to help build the sector's capacity in these priority areas.

Ensuring the provision of required staffing is ultimately the responsibility of the licensee and I ask that you continue to do what you can to address this most pressing need.

Approaches to scheduling, particularly in relation to weekends and long weekends, require particular attention. Homes that are part of a chain are encouraged to look to the chain to assist in addressing staffing issues. Please note that going forward, the supply of hospital resources is becoming more scarce as hospitals address their own human resource challenges and ramp up services. As such, they may not be available to assist to the extent that you may require.

Over the past days, we have seen a surge in community infection rates and outbreaks in long-term care homes. Please monitor the infection rates in your community; we will also communicate with those homes that are in the communities with increasing rates to take necessary enhanced precautions and action, such as screening, regular testing and other measures in accordance with the government issued directives, communication and guidance.

Thank you for your continued commitment and hard work to improve the quality of long-term care in Ontario.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

Richard Steele
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care

c:

Ms. Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Policy Division
Ms. Sheila Bristo, Assistant Deputy Ministry, Long-Term Care Operations Division
Ms. Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long Term Care Association
Ms. Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario
Mr. Dan Kaniuk, Chair, Board of Directors, Ontario Long-Term Care Association
Ms. Jane Sinclair, Chair, Board of Directors, Advantage Ontario
Ms. Olha Dobush, Executive Lead, LTC Stabilization
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Mr. Matt Anderson, CEO and President, Ontario Health
Mr. Patrick McCarthy, President/Chief Executive Officer, Omni Health Care Ltd.
Mr. C. William, Dilane, President, Responsive Management Services Inc.
Mr. David Jarlette, President, Jarlette Health Services
Mr. James Lavelle, President, Caressant-Care Nursing and Retirement Homes Limited
Mr. Vlad Volodarski, Chief Executive Officer, Chartwell Master Care LP
Mr. Nelson Ribeiro, Director, City of Toronto
Mr. Michael Harris, Vice President, Extendicare (Canada) Inc.
Ms. Megan Allen-Lamb, President peopleCare Communities Inc.
Ms. Wendy Gilmour, Senior Vice President, Revera Long Term Care Inc.
Mr. Ben Friedman, President, Rykka Care Centres GP Inc.
Mr. K. John Scotland, Chief Executive Officer, S & R Nursing Homes Ltd.
Mr. James Schlegel, President, Schlegel Villages Inc.
Mr. Nitin Jain, President & Chief Executive Officer, Sienna Senior Living
Ms. Tracy Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care