

April 23, 2020

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

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

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On Monday, April 20, the government released new modelling projections regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, with details provided on the government's [website](#). This information illustrated that Ontario is now trending positively, and the province has **likely avoided a significant surge in cases**. Additional information provided on Public Health Ontario's [website](#) shows a recent decrease in the province-wide reproduction rate of virus transmission, which means that Ontarians' collective efforts to implement the public health measures recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of Health have helped reduce the spread of the virus.

While the community rate of transmission is dropping at the provincial level, **outbreaks in long-term care and congregate settings continue to be a significant concern**. Tremendous efforts are being undertaken across the health system to protect vulnerable people in these settings. This includes providing additional health human resources; infection and prevention control support; and supplies and equipment needed to address current outbreaks. These efforts are helping stabilize long-term care homes.

The Command Table continues to focus on further actions to reduce spread in long-term care and congregate settings and support residents and staff, including the following actions:

- **Continuing implementation of enhanced testing in long-term care homes** in alignment with the direction to implement **proactive surveillance testing** in all long-term care homes.
- Responding to long-term care homes in critical need to ensure they have the **health human resources, infection and prevention control supports** and personal protective equipment.
- Providing updated direction in follow-up to the April 16<sup>th</sup> memo that enables the **transfer of hospital patients to retirement homes** in certain circumstances where this is safe to do and in the best interest of the patient.
- Working with the Federal government to access personnel and other supports from Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Canadian Armed Forces to assist in homes most at-risk.

The Command Table will continue to use the best available modelling data to inform decision-making, including the following actions related to managing spread:

- **Contact Tracing:** Ongoing collaboration with public health units to support contact tracing work, including ensuring timely contract tracing and tracking of adherence to self-isolation instructions.
- **Continued review of public health measures:** Monitoring the impact of Ontarians' collective actions to control the spread of COVID-19 and recommending adjustments as appropriate.

We thank you for protecting and supporting long-term care home residents and staff in this time of great need.

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