

Ministry of Health

Ministère de la Santé

Ontario 

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 Ontario
Health

December 8, 2020

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Ms. Caroline Lidstone-Jones
Chief Executive Officer
Indigenous Primary Health Care Council
970 Lawrence Avenue West, Suite 500
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Ms. Kavita Mehta
Chief Executive Officer
Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario
400 University Avenue, Suite 2100
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Ms. Jennifer Clement, BscN, NP-PHC
Chair
Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic Association
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Ms. Sarah Hobbs
Chief Executive Officer
Alliance for Healthier Communities
970 Lawrence Ave West, Suite 500
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Ms. Leanne Clarke
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario College of Family Physicians
400 University Avenue, Suite 2100
Toronto ON M5G 1S5

Dear Ms. Lidstone-Jones, Ms. Mehta, Ms. Clement, Ms. Hobbs and Ms. Clarke:

RE: Critical Role of Comprehensive Primary Care in COVID-19 Response

Thank you for your letter dated November 8, 2020, regarding the critical role and importance of comprehensive primary care in our ongoing planning efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic generally, and wave 2, specifically.

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Ms. Lidstone-Jones, Ms. Mehta, Ms. Clement, Ms. Hobbs and Ms. Clarke

The Ministry of Health (“the ministry”) and Ontario Health (OH) also wish to express our continued appreciation to your organizations and membership for your hard work and dedication in supporting Ontario’s COVID-19 response while continuing to provide access to primary care services.

As the ministry and OH work to effectively respond to wave 2 of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are working collaboratively with health care partner organizations and service providers focusing on key priorities around testing and assessment, enabling the safe delivery of in-person services, and flu immunization. We know that the fall flu and cold season will increase demands and pressures on the health care system while also leading more patients to seek testing. As a result, the ministry is closely monitoring positivity and testing rates in communities across Ontario while also working with OH to improve access to testing. As the trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic changes, the ministry and OH will work diligently with our health system partners – including primary care stakeholders – to be responsive and adaptive.

The ministry recognizes that primary care providers have been on the front lines, seeing the challenges on the ground, and will be looking to the primary care sector to help identify barriers, challenges, and opportunities to improve the care and safety of Ontarians. This includes continued engagement with primary care stakeholders in addressing health system challenges related to COVID-19, addressing primary care service backlogs, supporting immunizations in primary care and examining sustainable solutions on the delivery of virtual care while also ensuring the safe delivery of in-person care.

We are pleased to hear that your organizations met, and continue to meet, with ministry Directors responsible for Primary Care, Ontario Health Teams, COVID-19 Response, Public Health, and other areas involved in fall planning and preparedness. We will also include a representative from OH to participate in future meetings.

We appreciate your efforts to join together to provide unified primary care feedback and recommendations to the ministry and Ontario Health as our organizations collectively work together to ensure the health care system is best positioned to keep Ontarians safe and healthy in our fight against COVID-19.

Sincerely,



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