

DATE: **December 21, 2020**

MEMORANDUM TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees
Long-Term Care Home Administrators
Long-Term Care Home Directors of Nursing and Personal Care

FROM: Richard Steele
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care

RE: **Provincial COVID-19 Long-Term Care Home Outbreak Standard Operating Procedures**

This has been a challenging year, and I would like to begin by thanking all of you for your efforts and commitment as we continue our fight against the second wave of COVID-19.

Recognizing the need for continued vigilance and proactive measures to both prevent COVID-19 outbreaks, and effectively manage them when they do occur, I would like to draw your attention to the Provincial COVID-19 Long-Term Care Home Outbreak Standard Operating Procedures guideline document.

This guideline document incorporates the breadth of experience gained by the health sector since the pandemic began and lists best practices for homes and their leadership to immediately implement, once a positive COVID-19 case is identified. It is imperative that LTC homes are in a position to respond quickly to an initial outbreak as actions taken in the first 72 hours after a positive case is identified have a significant impact on the scope and severity of the outbreak.

The guidance document has been designed to address issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is not meant to replace the many detailed directives and resources already available, the standard operating procedure provides a concise overview of the most important steps homes must take early on to contain an outbreak.

Preparedness and continual vigilance is key—this document operates on the assumption that your home already has outbreak management plans, proactive screening and monitoring protocols, training and auditing on IPAC protocols, communication systems with families, resident monitoring by the medical director and staff, and established partnerships at the local level (hospital, Ontario Health region, public health).

Whether or not your home has experienced a COVID-19 outbreak this year, I want to stress the importance of reviewing the actions to take in the first 72 hours after a positive case is identified to ensure that the best effort is made to contain spread and reduce harm.

We must continue to work together and remain vigilant through this holiday season. It is critical that you have a strong staffing plan in place to ensure appropriate coverage through to January 15th, 2021 and beyond. Please have this plan readily available in the event that you are asked to share it with our inspections team.

Thank you again for your hard work the past few months, and for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

Richard Steele

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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