

April 1, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Preparations and Actions

In follow-up to our last communication, we are pleased to share the following updates from the provincial Command Table on key actions that are being taken to address COVID-19:

- **Expanding capacity** across the province to respond to the increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases. These actions include:
 - Building on increases to in-hospital acute care and critical care bed capacity by **extending capacity** through alternative, unconventional spaces, including adjacent field hospital sites.
 - Facilitating the **matching of broader health human resources** with increasing capacity demands in hospitals, long-term care homes and within the community efficiently and effectively. This includes:
 - Mobilizing the 13,000 health care professionals identified through the volunteer website, by implementing a matching process and tool by the end of this week;
 - Enabling new workers, including as many as 1,000 medical students already identified, to be deployed to assist in the COVID-19 response.
 - Taking steps to ensure front-line workers have the Personal Protective Equipment they need to deliver care safely.
- Accelerating actions to **clear the provincial backlog of COVID-19 lab tests** by the end of this week and **double the number of daily lab tests completed**, which was approximately 5,000 tests per day on March 30th. As noted previously, a plan is in development on how to best use this new lab capacity, given progress made with clearing the backlog (e.g., additional focus on surveillance of long-term care homes and vulnerable populations)
- Augmenting supplies and equipment by continuing aggressive actions to **procure all available PPE** to support the health system. These actions include:

- Daily tracking of PPE supply enabled through the Minister's Order issued on March 27th to understand what is available provincially and where it is needed most urgently;
 - Establishing a provincial control table to make allocation and distribution decisions using an ethical framework;
 - Procuring alternatives, where acceptable, to N95 respirators and masks to improve safety and protection for front-line workers; and
 - Implementing a process to integrate donations locally into the provincial supplies and equipment stock and optimizing distribution logistics to deliver these locally and provincially.
- Continuing to **support long-term care homes**, particularly those that are experiencing outbreak, with the staff, PPE and training that they need to effectively protect residents, as set out in the Chief Medical Officer of Health's Directive #3, updated on March 30th.
 - Establishing a **public health measures table**, chaired by Dr. David McKeown, to assist with accelerated evaluation and assessment of all available public health measures, in collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

We will continue to keep you apprised of actions taken in these key areas and work with you to develop solutions as our pandemic response unfolds.

Thank you for your ongoing engagement with your local partners to prepare for business continuity and for COVID-19's impact on the health system.

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