

March 18, 2020

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

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

---

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

- Additional guidance is to be released by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health concerning (as soon as possible):
  - Public health measures for health care workers returning from travel outside of Canada, including those who work in long-term care homes
  - Restriction of visitors to hospitals, with some exceptions (similar to the restrictions effective in long-term care homes)
  - Ramp-down of elective and non-emergent activities for Regulated Health Professionals or group practices of Regulated Health Professionals
- A team from Ontario Health, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Long-term Care and others will centralize and continue the work of assessing additional spaces in the community, such as hotels and retirement homes, which could be safely utilized to alleviate immediate hospital and long-term care capacity pressures.
- Augmented capacity to respond to COVID-19-related calls at Telehealth coming online, including doubling the number of call lines and increasing the number of Registered Nurses, as well as working with a broader network of organizations to support call response and triage.
- Focused efforts to rapidly expedite procurement continuing, including centralized procurement of additional ventilators; purchased personal protective equipment including gloves and surgical masks to support the COVID-19 response.

- A team will be dedicated to identifying and removing legislative, regulatory and policy barriers to enable health care providers to quickly and effectively deliver the care and services needed during this emergency period.

We will continue to communicate progress on these actions as they are implemented.

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