

March 6, 2020

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

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

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Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for the incredible work you have done and continue to do in responding to the evolving COVID-19 situation.

We wanted to share with you some of the work and directions from the provincial Command Table.

We have several goals that are guiding our work:

- Minimize the impact of COVID-19 on the health of the population of Ontario.
- Support and care for those who contract COVID-19.
- Protect and support our health care workers.
- Protect and maintain our health system for all Ontarians who need it for non-COVID-19 related illness and support.
- Provide essential stewardship of vital supplies, equipment and public resources.

To achieve these goals, we are taking actions in the following areas:

- Contain the spread of the virus by **active case finding and contact management** through Public Health.
- Support Greater Toronto Area hospitals in establishing **assessment centres**, with plans to expand to other areas of the province in a phased approach.
- Enhanced surveillance activities, including expanding criteria for testing and **expanding lab capacity**.
- Expand and enhance our **Telehealth and other virtual care capacity**, to support people being assessed and supported at home.
- Update **guidance on use of Personal Protective Equipment**, to ensure that patient and health care workers are appropriately protected.

- Manage the **supply of Personal Protective Equipment** to ensure that it is available where it is needed, including methods to ensure it can be distributed/redistributed to protect patients and health care workers.
- Identify opportunities to **alleviate hospital capacity**, should that be required
- Continue **communications** with health care workers and organizations, as well as patients and the public.

To support achieving these goals, we need your help. We recommend that your organizations take the following steps to help be prepared:

- Confirm that your pandemic plans and your business continuity plans are up-to-date and well understood throughout your organization.
- Participate in your Regional planning tables, as asked. If you are unclear on these and your roles, please contact your Ontario Health Regional Lead, or Catherine Brown, OH COVID-19 Lead.
- Verify that your Occupational Health and Safety team and Joint Health and Safety Committees have reviewed COVID-19 protocols and are ready to support your organizations and employees.

As mentioned above, we will continue to communicate proactively in a timely manner as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, so you will hear from us again soon. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Ministry Communications Team to identify any communications gaps.

Again, our thanks for your tremendous support of our patients and communities.

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