

May 16, 2020

STATEMENT

TORONTO, ONTARIO – The Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA), representing a majority of the province’s private, non-profit, municipal and charitable long-term care homes, is calling on the Government of Ontario to commit to a public inquiry to solve longstanding and systemic issues highlighted by COVID-19. An inquiry must, however, follow immediate action to ensure long-term care homes on the frontlines have the supplies, staff, and ongoing testing they need to protect vulnerable residents from COVID-19.

“Now is the time for action. COVID-19 is responsible for unimaginable tragedy around the world and we must do more to fight it here in Ontario,” said Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Long Term Care Association. “The Premier has already committed to a review and we know he will live up to that commitment. Public inquiries are important, but they take years. We need to focus on immediate solutions to protect our residents and the frontline heroes who care for them – then thoughtfully address the long-standing systemic issues COVID-19 has highlighted.”

The OLTCA is calling on the Government of Ontario to provide immediate support by:

- **Maintaining Human Resources Flexibility:** The staffing shortage was severe even before the pandemic. Continued flexibility is required to retain the qualified students and internationally trained health professionals recruited during the pandemic. Continued flexibility is also required to refocus staff time to care over administration. These flexibilities support nurses and personal support workers so they can focus on care.
- **Personal Protective Equipment and Testing Prioritization:** The staffing shortage cannot be solved until long-term care homes have the personal protective equipment and the easily available and rapid testing they need. Prioritization must continue as the economy opens up.

The OLTCA has tirelessly advocated for reform to the province’s long-term care sector. In its [2020 budget submission](#), it identified a ‘perfect storm’ of issues threatening sustainability. Successive provincial governments have yet to meaningfully address red tape and build a funding model so that long-term care homes have the beds and staff that they need.

“There is no simple solution, but we know we cannot wait any longer to address immediate issues and start to address the historic larger structural and systemic problems. This important work can only be done in collaboration with the government, all parties, and our labour and other health care system partners like hospitals,” said Donna Duncan.