

May 19, 2020

STATEMENT

The Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) released the following statement related to the Ontario Government's independent commission:

"The Ontario Long Term Care Association, representing a majority of the province's private, not-for-profit, charitable, and municipal long-term care homes, supports the Ford Government's independent commission of the sector so it can address longstanding and systemic issues highlighted by COVID-19. But now is the time for action, and Ontario's long-term care homes urgently need expedited capital redevelopment funding, interim investments for older homes to enable effective infection control, more supplies and rapid testing, continued human resources flexibility and increased support from homes' medical directors and other primary care resources. Our priority must remain the health and safety of residents and the staff who care for them, and to support families now as they manage difficult, but important, measures like restricted visitation.

A focused independent commission, undertaken in partnership with labour and other key partners in the healthcare system, will deliver a clear path forward to secure the safety and sustainability of long-term care. Any Ontarian who needs long-term care must be able to access it, but that will not come without addressing the system's fundamental requirements, reducing red tape, and creating a long-term care system that allows operators to replace aging homes, and build new ones, while hiring the staff their residents need.

We want to thank Premier Ford, Deputy Premier Elliott, Minister Fullerton and the entire Cabinet as well as the leader of the NDP, Andrea Horwath and Liberal Leader Steven Del Duca for their support of the long-term care sector and their commitment to improving care for vulnerable seniors going forward.

We also want to recognize the families of residents and caregivers who have suffered greatly by the isolation imposed by this pandemic.

As the economy opens up, and there is increased risk of community transmission, it is paramount that the government continue to make long-term care a priority for personal protective equipment and testing, and provide homes with the flexibility to allow nurses and personal support workers to focus more of their time on caring for residents – not paperwork.

Long-term care homes are the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19, and the OLTCA and its members will work closely with the Ontario Government to ensure they have what they need for today, and to prepare for a potential second wave."