

October 21, 2020

## STATEMENT

**The following statement should be attributed to Donna Duncan, CEO of the Ontario Long Term Care Association:**

"Long-term care homes care for more than 79,000 residents across Ontario and they deserve quality healthcare and safe accommodations. Liability protection is a necessary measure to stabilize and renew Ontario's entire long-term care sector. Without it, many insurance companies will cease coverage, as they have already begun to do, putting homes across the province at risk and jeopardizing their expansion and renewal. There are 36,000 residents and their families waiting for long-term care today and within 14 years the number of Ontario seniors over 80 is expected to double. We need a strong long-term care sector that can respond to rapidly growing needs positioned to provide high quality and compassionate care. We welcome today's announcement, which includes healthcare workers and institutions working in good faith on the frontlines of the fight COVID-19, and we call on all parties to support this proposed legislation to secure its quick implementation.

This approach, consistent with British Columbia, is recognition of the unprecedented nature of this virus that all frontline services faced. It in no way absolves responsibility when it comes to issues of gross negligence. There remains zero tolerance for the abuse and neglect of our seniors and any reckless or irresponsible operator should still be held accountable and will not be protected by this measure.

This new measure, if passed by the Ontario Legislative Assembly, must be implemented in tandem with immediate action by the federal government on an insurance back-stop program, as requested in the OLTCA's letter to the Prime Minister last week. A federal liability insurance back-stop program is necessary for long-term care homes that are already experiencing issues securing or renewing insurance for their sustainability, revitalization and expansion. Long-term care operators and their insurance partners need a government solution to continue to serve Ontario's seniors now and into the future as our members experience prohibitive exclusions in their coverage related to communicable diseases – with a scope beyond just COVID-19.

Now is the time to rally around our most vulnerable seniors and overcome longstanding systemic issues to protect them. This can be done through building and improving beds, especially in older buildings, where COVID-19 had the most impact and sadly will continue to through a second wave. This is not possible without liability protection as it is a critical component of financing agreements. There is a lot at stake without liability protection for Ontario's seniors in long-term care homes and the 36,000 on the waitlist – especially as the province's population over 80 is set to double in the next 14 years."