

October 8, 2020

STATEMENT

Donna Duncan, CEO of the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA), released the following statement related to the Ontario Patient Ombudsman's COVID-19 Special Report:

"Ontario's health system should be centered on the needs of the most vulnerable it serves, so I want to thank Patient Ombudsman Cathy Fooks for her COVID-19 Special Report that brings forward the important experiences of long-term care residents, their families, and the caregivers and staff who support them. Its clear set of recommendations will ensure there is no repeat of the tragedy that unfolded in the first wave of COVID-19 through increased measures to protect against a second wave, many of which are already in place now.

This report and its recommendations follow the OLTCA's [intense advocacy](#) to its stakeholders, including the Ontario Government, on the challenges Ontario's long-term care homes face before and during COVID-19 and the Wave 2 Action Plan required to keep them stabilized moving forward. The OLTCA and the Patient Ombudsman share recognition that true partnership with residents, their families, and the caregivers and staff who support them, is essential to the well-being of our seniors. To maintain this important relationship, every necessary protection from COVID-19 must be in place within long-term care homes, and their communities, in-order to keep everyone safe.

These critical measures include dedicated infection prevention and control (IPAC) resources in every home, prioritization for testing with rapid results, prioritization of personal protective equipment (PPE) like N95 given evolving guidance, onsite medical support, retrofits to older homes to make isolation and cohorting easier and making resources available to ensure staff feel safe and supported as we build a new workforce and meaningfully address the longstanding human resources crisis. These measures will mean Ontario's long-term care homes are ready to respond to pandemics and stay ahead of them as they unfold, while finally integrating long-term care into the broader health care system enabling better care for residents.

The OLTCA will continue to advocate for policy changes and build the necessary partnerships for Ontario's seniors to receive the care they deserve. The Patient Ombudsman's report is an important step to making that a reality and its recommendations must be put into place fully without delay.

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