

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Office of the Associate Deputy
Long-Term Care Pandemic
Response

400 University Ave, 6th Fl
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Ministère des Soins de longue durée

Bureau du sous-ministre associée
Intervention contre la pandémie pour les
soins de longue durée

400, av University, 6^e étage
Toronto ON M5G 1S5



March 23, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: LTC Home Licensees

FROM: Erin Hannah
Associate Deputy Minister
LTC Pandemic Response

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Surveillance Testing

I am writing today to express our continued appreciation for the work all of you have done to evolve the surveillance testing program in long-term care. The ministry continues to see value in an effective surveillance testing program while acknowledging the desire to consider opportunities for relaxing some requirements as soon as possible in a safe way as Ontario experiences a third wave of COVID-19 characterized by the increasing prevalence of variants of concerns.

We will be sharing more information in the very near future about how the ministry will approach the critical work needed to support recovery in the long-term care sector, and how we will engage our partners to do this important work. Recovery planning will consider the advice we receive from various sources, including scientific researchers and medical experts as well as our home partners, caregivers, and residents.

We have started this work already in the testing sphere for example as we undertake a collaborative study with two homes, Baycrest and Houses of Providence, to look at whether reduced testing frequency has an impact on vaccine uptake. We are also actively working with a few homes to take a closer look at the surveillance testing outcomes in homes to gain a deeper picture of how this tool has helped to strengthen our protections.

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We know that residents, their families and staff in your homes want to see the benefits of vaccination in their everyday lives. We share this enthusiasm and are committed to working together to finding a safe path forward. I look forward to working with you in the weeks and months ahead as we continue to evolve our response to the realities of the pandemic and develop a plan for recovery and path to a “new normal”.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Erin Hannah
Associate Deputy Minister
LTC Pandemic Response

c: Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC)
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery Division, Ministry of Health (MOH)
Melissa Thomson, Assistant Deputy Minister, MOH
Michael Hillmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Capacity Planning and Analytics Division, MOH/MLTC
Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario
Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long Term Care Association
Monika Turner, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Michael Jacek, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Colleen Geiger, President and CEO (Acting), Public Health Ontario
Jeff Butler, Assistant Deputy Minister, LTC Pandemic Response, MLTC
Sheila Bristo, Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations, MLTC