

October 21, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Preparations and Actions

This week, we initiated a change to the name of the Health Command Table, which will now be called the Health Coordination Table. This name better aligns with the intended mandate of the body – to support the coordination and alignment of initiatives across the Ontario health system’s response to COVID-19. The Health Coordination Table will provide recommendations and advice to a Joint Minister’s Pandemic Response Leadership Table for decision. This Leadership Table is led by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Long-Term Care.

We will continue as co-chairs of the Health Coordination Table, working with members from the ministries of Long-Term Care, Seniors and Accessibility, Ontario Health, Public Health Ontario, health system leaders and the policy and implementation leads responsible for delivering all components from the COVID-19 Fall Preparedness Plan to provide the best advice and recommendations to our Ministers.

This week, the Health Coordination Table focused on the following key actions to ensure that Ontario’s health care system is prepared for the Fall influenza season and effectively responding to COVID-19:

- **Preparations to launch additional health human resources (HHR) initiatives that support long-term care homes with staffing shortages:**
 - The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care are working with Ontario Health and health system partners to build a comprehensive and efficient process for identifying, screening, training, deploying and onboarding additional resources into long-term care homes and other settings in need.
- **Continued distribution of additional influenza vaccines to regions across Ontario in response to the high demand.**
 - As of October 20th, the Ministry distributed over 3.9 million vaccine doses via the Ontario Government Pharmacy – over 1 million more doses than this time in 2019.

- The Ministry is closely monitoring the demand for flu vaccines and continues to acquire additional doses to ensure there is sufficient supply.
- **Implementing a collaborative model of Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) supports.**
 - In partnership with the Ministries of Health, Long-Term Care, Seniors and Accessibility and other ministries, Ontario Health is deploying IPAC regional hubs to conduct risk assessments and provide congregate care settings with IPAC expertise, advice and supports.
- **Developing new testing approaches to increase access in communities where high test positivity rates coincide with low overall testing rates.**
 - The Ministry of Health and Ontario Health are developing a suite of supports to improve access to testing in underserved communities, monitor the impacts of these targeted responses and adjust as necessary.
- **Reviewing jurisdictional case studies to further inform provincial capacity planning in Wave 2.**
 - The Science Advisory Table presented case studies on the efficacy of dedicated COVID-19 hospitals in other jurisdictions and presented options to maintain health system capacity for response and recovery in Ontario.

We thank you for your continued work to respond to the pandemic and implement a phased recovery.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

Helen Angus
Deputy Minister
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Dr. David Williams
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