

March 23, 2020

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Preparations and Actions

In follow-up to our last communication, we are pleased to share the following updates from the provincial Command Table on key actions that are being taken to address COVID-19:

- Accelerating activities to **reduce the backlog of laboratory tests and increase provincial testing capacity** by:
 - Establishing a **provincial diagnostics coordination network** immediately lead by Ontario Health to provide integrated coordination of resources, procurement and test routing;
 - **Evaluating innovative testing approaches** in the next 2 days; and
 - Actioning new capacity creation ideas by creating a provincially coordinated **intake/assessment function** separate from current delivery resources.
- Developing guidance from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) regarding the appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for non-health care workers.
- Continuing to pursue all options to **secure additional supplies and equipment**, with a priority focus on masks and ventilators, in the quantities needed to meet current and projected demands, including significant procurements. Progress is being made as federal and provincial governments mobilize to source and find innovative approaches.
- Launching a **volunteer website** to mobilize available workforce capacity towards the provincial response to COVID-19.
 - The website focuses on health care providers, former health care providers who are retired, or on inactive status with their regulatory college and other types of volunteers.

- Next steps will focus on creating a central matching platform that will allow health care providers in each of the five regions to access rosters of available providers.
- **Augmenting Telehealth's intake and response capacity** including:
 - Continuing to increase the number of nurses at Telehealth to complement Telehealth Ontario's existing 200 Registered Nurses.
 - Increasing non-clinical intake support capacity to support improve response times.

Concerning the Premier's announcement today ordering the mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces, further information will follow in the coming days.

Thank you for your ongoing engagement with your local partners to prepare for business continuity and for COVID-19's impact on the health system.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

Helen Angus
Deputy Minister
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Ministry of Health

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