

April 28, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Planning and Actions

This week, the Health Coordination Table focused on the following key actions to enable Ontario's health care system to effectively respond to COVID-19:

- **Managing the rapid rise in hospitalizations by adding net new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds, maximizing existing capacity, and re-deploying Health Human Resources (HHR) to priority areas.**
 - The ministry is continuing to add net new ICU beds to increase overall hospital capacity and free up existing capacity to ensure that acute care spaces are available for COVID-19 patients in need of urgent care. The mobile health unit at Sunnybrook hospital, developed in partnership with the federal government, has admitted its first patient and is staffed to operate up to 20 beds currently, and can be scaled-up to a total of 80 beds.
 - On April 28, 2021, the ministry issued a temporary emergency order to allow hospitals with the flexibility to transfer patients to long-term care or retirements homes without obtaining consent. The Ministries of Health, Long-Term Care and Ontario Health are working with the sector to closely evaluate the use of the order during major surge events. This will also include efforts to ensure that receiving long-term care and retirement homes are well positioned provide the appropriate level of care.
 - This increase in capacity has also been supported by the HHR redeployment efforts of Ontario Health, working with Home and Community Care Support Services staff, and surgical staff. In addition, the province has been working inter-provincially, and with the federal government, to identify critical care staff that can be deployed to Ontario's hospitals. This week, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador redeployed nine medical professionals to Ontario hospitals with the greatest support needs.

- **Identifying considerations in understanding the progression of the pandemic to guide future planning efforts.**
 - The ministry is considering advice from a broad range of experts including the Public Health Measures Table, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and published evidence from other jurisdictions, to understand the projected trajectory of the virus along with the planned increase in vaccinations, to inform future planning efforts.

- **Reviewing the most recent scientific evidence and modelling to inform advice to government on the ongoing pandemic response.**
 - The Science Advisory and Modelling Consensus Tables presented the latest COVID-19 case projections and trends, and the anticipated impact on public health, overall cases, and health system capacity over the coming weeks.
 - Further analysis was presented on the risk of COVID-19 transmission in indoor compared to outdoor settings.

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
Ministry of Health

Dr. David Williams
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Ministry of Health

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