

July 29, 2020

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Long-Term Care Sector Partners

**FROM:** Richard Steele  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Long-Term Care

**SUBJECT:** Independent Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission

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Thank you to everyone in Ontario's long-term care sector for your continued dedication and hard work during these challenging times. Working together with our partners across the health sector, we have made substantial progress in containing COVID-19 within the long-term care sector. In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue working closely with you to ensure we are as prepared as possible to prevent and contain future outbreaks.

Nevertheless, as you know perhaps better than anyone, COVID-19 has proven to be an unprecedented public health crisis, particularly in the long-term care sector.

In response to the virus and its particular impact on long-term care, the Minister of Long-Term Care has appointed an independent commission into COVID-19 and long-term care. The commission will investigate how COVID-19 spread within long-term care homes; how residents, staff, families and others were impacted; and review the measures taken by the province and other parties to prevent, isolate and contain the spread. Above all, it will provide the government with guidance on how to better protect long-term care home residents and staff from any future outbreaks.

The Premier and Minister of Long-Term Care announced the launch of the independent commission today. Three commission members have been appointed for the expertise and experience they can bring to addressing the commission's mandate. They are:

- Associate Chief Justice Frank N. Marrocco (Chair) – Accomplished counsel and legal author, who has served the legal profession in a number of roles including leader of the Law Society, Justice Marrocco was appointed to the Superior Court of Justice in 2005.
- Angela Coke – A former senior executive with the Ontario Public Service, and recipient of the Public Sector Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Public Sector Quality Association and Excellence Canada.
- Dr. Jack Kitts – Recipient of the Order of Canada and known nationally for his focus and expertise in patient experience, performance measurement and physician engagement, Dr. Kitts recently retired after 18 years as President and CEO of The Ottawa Hospital.

To conduct a thorough and meaningful investigation, the commission will have the power to summons any person to give evidence and produce documents. The commissioners are expected to deliver their final report by April 2021, and this report will be made public.

I would like to recognize the work of your teams and the sector as a whole — this commission is not intended to diminish the work and dedication of those at the frontline. That said, there is a real need for continuous improvement in long-term care, and this commission will provide an objective third-party perspective to learn from the experience of the past several months. In the meantime, Ontario will continue to move forward with system improvements and apply early learnings from COVID-19 while the work of the commission is underway. We will proceed with modernization efforts and implementation of recommendations from Justice Gillese's report.

The well-being of residents in long-term care is our shared top priority. Thank you to all of our partners. This has been tremendously challenging time for our sector. I look forward to continuing to work with you in improving long-term care in Ontario.

Sincerely,

(ORIGINAL SIGNED BY)

Richard Steele  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Long-Term Care