

# Long-Term Care COVID-19 Preparedness Assessment Framework

July 2020

Addressing risk factors and sustaining success factors from the emergency response to date is key to help advance the long-term care (LTC) sector stabilization action planning currently underway at the local, regional and provincial levels.

There is an urgency to ensure preparedness for potential future wave/s of COVID-19 (e.g., September – October readiness).

Recognizing that LTC homes have varied needs driven by resident experiences and a number of other structural and operational characteristics, a common framework for assessing preparedness and planning allows responses to be tailored to local needs. This framework is not a checklist; it provides a set of goals and an outline for the key factors of preparedness to help guide the preparedness assessment and planning exercise. Planning exercises may take different forms, such as surveys, table-top exercises, interviews, focus groups.

When completing the preparedness assessments, assume that all emergency orders remain in effect and leverage existing direction and guidance (see last page of this document).

This common framework is to be used by each LTC home, in partnership with Ontario Health colleagues to conduct preparedness assessments.

Results of completed assessments will help support provincial and regional decisions and supports (e.g., improved infection, prevention and control measures, other).

## PRINCIPLES

- **User-centric** within broader integrated provincial health system
- Support **culture** of learning and continuous quality improvement
- **Evidence based** – learnings from the emergency response, evidence and advice from experts, studies, literature reviews and jurisdictional experiences

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Inform health system wide and regional **capacity planning**
- Align regional and provincial **actions** to address the identified gaps
- Help inform homes' **preparedness**, stabilization and outbreak/infection management plans

## TIMELINES

- By the end of **August**:
  - preparedness assessments will be completed by all long-term care homes;
  - Ontario Health regions will roll up results and provide to the Ministry of Long-Term Care. Preparedness assessments may be conducted again in the future.

## KEY FACTORS OF EFFECTIVE PREPAREDNESS

Based on learnings to date, there are three key factors of effective preparedness. The following three factors must be part of each LTC home preparedness assessment and planning exercises. Additional factors may be added to the assessment and/or plans as relevant for each LTC home.

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### HUMAN RESOURCES

- Appropriate level and capacity of leadership and management in place, including leadership recruitment, development, retention and support (as relevant)
  - A health human resources plan in place to ensure staffing levels that are appropriate for full-service delivery, including plans for return to work and staffing shortages in the event of emergency and need
  - Appropriate occupational health, wellness and mental health supports in place for human resources' return to work, attraction and retention
  - Reliable medical care that is accessible for on-site care
  - Reunited residents with their families (visitations and family member as supporting caregivers)
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### INFECTION, PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPAC)

- Dedicated capacity, planning, partnerships and clear internal accountability for oversight, reinforcement and support of proper IPAC responsibilities, protocols and practices for all staff in the home (e.g., O. Reg. 79/10 requires designated lead for training and orientation, however, the lead may not be an IPAC specialist or may be a shared resource across multiple homes, but has access to specialized resources in the local hospital, Public Health Ontario regional communities of practice and/or the local public health unit)
- Consistent, evidence informed and verified IPAC protocols and practices in place
- Sustainable supply of protective personal equipment (PPE) for staff and for residents and visitors where appropriate
- Regular on-site IPAC assessments
- Ensuring all staff in the home have “core” IPAC training (e.g., PIDAC Best Practices), and access to on-demand training on IPAC and PPE. Core training includes moments for hand hygiene and appropriate use of PPE for new staff as well as training refresh in donning and doffing of PPE with audits and feedback
- Processes, resources and adequate equipment/supplies in place to train and implement best practices for regular environmental cleaning. Ensure an audit and feedback process is in place
- Physical infrastructure that supports and enables IPAC standards and protocols
- Options/plan for additional precautions, including single room allocation and cohorting that support IPAC practices

- Process, capacity and adequate supply of swabs for regular staff surveillance testing in accordance with guidance issued by government
- Process, protocol and appropriate human resources are in place to respond to, contain and manage an infectious disease outbreak
- Options for alternative bed capacity that protects resident safety and wellbeing and follows IPAC guidelines

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## PARTNERSHIPS AND SUSTAINED OPERATIONS

- Communication and engagement processes and protocols in place for effective and timely communication with residents, staff, partners and families
- Partnership and/or mentorship support relationships established with local community partners (e.g., Ontario Health, local Public Health Unit/s, hospital/s, primary care, other)
- Plan for sustainable operations, including response to a major outbreak
- Clear, reliable and accessible governance and decision-making structures

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

The following list is not exhaustive – other materials may be used/referenced, including guidance materials prepared by Ontario Health Regions.

Government of Ontario - [COVID-19 LTC Stakeholder Communications web page](#) (also in [French](#))

Public Health Ontario - COVID-19: IPAC for Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes Readiness Checklist ([English version](#), [French version](#))

Provincial Infections Disease Advisory Committee – IPAC – Best Practices in IPAC Programs in Ontario ([English version](#), [French version](#))