

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Office of the Deputy Minister

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July 16, 2020

TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees:

RE: COVID-19 Testing for Long-Term Care Home Staff

Ontarians are helping reduce the spread of COVID-19 by staying home, practising social distancing and proper hand hygiene, cleaning with disinfectants, and wearing masks or face coverings. We must continue to do everything we can to protect residents, staff and their families in all long-term care homes.

Testing is key to defeating COVID-19, as the sooner we can identify cases, the better positioned we are to contain them and save lives. Ontario has taken aggressive action to testing to understand the status of COVID-19 and inform infection prevention and control measures.

Further to our memo of May 31, 2020, surveillance testing of long-term care staff will continue until further notice. Long-term care homes should continue to ensure that all staff receive at least two COVID-19 tests per month.

The testing includes all individuals working in long-term care homes, including frontline workers, management, food-service workers and contracted service providers. Testing is to be conducted by the long-term care home, where possible. If on-site testing is not feasible, homes are asked to work with their established regional contacts at Ontario Health to identify alternative approaches.

Continued testing is vital as the economy continues to reopen. We must keep doing the things that are working — including tracking the rates of infection and/or transmission in the community through testing and surveillance.

By continuing to work together, including getting tested, we will stop the spread of this virus, save lives, protect staff and their families, and help residents reunite with their loved ones faster.

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to improving the quality of long-term care in Ontario.

For additional information and frequently asked questions, please refer to the enclosed document or email your regional contact at Ontario Health.

Sincerely,

(ORIGINAL SIGNED BY)

Richard Steele
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care

Matthew Anderson
President & CEO, Ontario Health

cc:

Ms. Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Policy Division
Mr. Brian Pollard, Assistant Deputy Ministry, Long-Term Care Operations Division
Ms. Donna Duncan, Ontario Long Term Care Association
Ms. Lisa Levin, AdvantAge Ontario
Mr. Dan Kaniuk, Chair, Board of Directors, Ontario Long-Term Care Association
Ms. Jane Sinclair, Chair, Board of Directors, Advantage Ontario
Ms. Catherine Brown, President, Shared Services, Ontario Health
Dr. Dirk Huyer, Chief Coroner for Ontario
Ms. Olha Dobush, Executive Lead, LTC Stabilization

Attachment: COVID-19 Surveillance Testing — Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes Staff Testing