



Ontario Health

To: Health System Partners

From: Matthew Anderson, President and CEO, Ontario Health

SUBJECT: April 22, 2020 -- UPDATE #2: Health System COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The information below from Ontario Health's COVID-19 Health System Response Team, part of the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Response Structure, is the second of ongoing updates. It highlights the work in critical areas as we quicken efforts with provincial, regional and local pandemic planning partners.

Long-Term Care

- Accelerating immediate measures to support the province's COVID-19 Action Plan: Long-Term Care Homes.
- Working with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care, fast-tracking efforts with the Regions, additional partner ministries, Public Health Ontario, Ontario hospitals and others to support long-term care and retirement homes in aggressive testing, screening and surveillance; managing outbreaks and spread of the disease; growing the long-term care workforce; and ensuring critical supplies including personal protective equipment.
- Also supporting programs to provide on-demand access to primary care or general internal medicine supplementary clinical expertise via virtual and phone consults.

Testing

- In addition to long-term care homes and retirement residences, supporting expanded testing of other vulnerable populations: hospital inpatients; health care workers, caregivers, care providers, first responders; and community living facilities.
- Ramping up testing is the result of eradicating the backlog in testing results thanks to co-ordination by the COVID-19 Diagnostic Network Operations Centre – 20+ organizations now participating – that has enormously increased testing capability.
- In partnership with the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario and labs across the province, the province met its 8,000+ tests a day target by mid-April and are working toward 14,000+ tests a day by later this month.
- Work includes supporting Assessment Centres across the province to proactively expand screening and set regional and local testing targets to increase volumes.
- There are currently 108 Assessment Centres open to the public, an additional three open for healthcare workers only, and two specifically serving six Indigenous communities.

Hospital Capacity Planning

- Supporting hospitals across the province aligning new acute care bed capacity with potential demand.
- Hospitals also are repurposing beds and equipment from other areas to prepare to expand critical care capacity.
- Plus, working to keep ahead of the disease curve by implementing alternative, unconventional spaces, including adjacent field hospital sites.
- Asked hospitals not to begin ramping up elective surgeries and procedures if their hospitals have capacity because of the impact long-term care needs could have on acute care and the very high risks. Working on recommendations for taking a measured approach to ramping up at the appropriate time.

Critical Care

- An Ontario-wide Critical Care COVID-19 Command Centre responding to needs for COVID critical care capacity, making sure the province is able to maximize available resources at all times, where they are needed.
- Includes moving resources to meet local demands and to address any emerging pressures in critical care capacity.
- Specifically, the Critical Care Command Centre is working to increase the availability of critical care beds and ventilators across the province, use innovative staffing models, provide access to the pandemic stock when required, and re-purpose existing spaces and equipment to maximize the critical care bed capacity.
- The Command Centre combines the strengths and functionality of Ornge, CitiCall, Critical Care Services Ontario, and the province's regional critical care leadership.

Supply Chain: PPE, Ventilators, etc.

- Continuing to support the Ministry of Health in procuring and distributing critical supplies and equipment throughout the province.
- Also looking at evidence-based approaches health care organizations could take, should, in the worst-case scenario, we are ever faced with a severe shortage of PPE that might strain, or possibly outstrip, our supply chain capacity.
- Approaches under consideration are not currently being put in place in any clinical settings.

Patient and Caregiver Input

- A Patient and Family Advisors group created to advise me as Ontario Health's President and CEO about the COVID-19 response.
- Members includes patient council chairs and other patient and family representatives from across the Ontario Health network.

Health System Response Team

- Welcoming Shripal Doshi on an interim basis from KPMG's Management Consulting Practice to lead the unified supply chain team.
- Also welcoming Dr. Vanessa Allen, Chief Microbiology at Public Health Ontario, to lead the integrated lab testing effort.
- With special thanks to David Hallett who returns to his retirement after helping put an enhanced system and infrastructure in place to help keep PPE and other supplies flowing in the face of travel disruptions and import challenges, and prior to that, setting up the integrated lab testing system.

Huge thanks, as always, to everyone in the health system for your incredible service and unrelenting work juggling many issues as we all continue to respond to COVID-19.

Matthew Anderson