

Wayne Emmerson
Chairman and CEO



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Via email: christine.elliott@pc.ola.org
rod.phillipsco@pc.ola.org

Hon. Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Hon. Rod Phillips
Minister of Long-Term Care
Ministry of Long-Term Care
6th Floor, 400 University Ave
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1S5

Dear Ministers:

The Regional Municipality of York truly appreciates the ongoing efforts, supports and funding commitments from the Ontario Government to support the long-term care sector throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We also commend the Province on appointing an independent Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission. The release of the Commission's Final Report with 85 recommendations are critical in building an improved and resilient long-term care sector and ensuring homes can effectively respond to COVID-19 and future outbreaks.

We recognize tackling change within the long-term care system will take time, consideration and effort which the Province is already diligently working towards. However, there are several recommendations in the Commission's report we believe require urgent action from the Province.

Our report ***Analysis of Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission's Final Report and Recommendations for Urgent Provincial Action*** accompanies this letter and identifies 23 recommendations from the Commission's report that should be prioritized for provincial action. Informed by extensive engagements with staff working in and supporting the Region's long-term care homes, York Region community partners and Ontario Health Teams in York Region, our priority recommendations for urgent provincial action are:

- Recommendations 36, 40, 43, 44, 49, 51 and 54 to help address the urgent need for skilled staff in long-term care homes
- Recommendations 56 and 77 to ensure provincial funding reflects the true costs of operating a long-term care home
- Recommendations 2, 5, 23 and 24 to ensure that long-term care residents remain protected and are not exposed to the risks from the spread of infectious diseases
- Recommendations 34, 58 and 62 to encourage improved resident-centred care
- Recommendations 29, 53, 71 and 75 to remove legislative and regulatory barriers to resident-centred care
- Recommendation 59 to ensure seniors are supported by comprehensive home and community care services
- Recommendations 27 and 28 to ensure long-term care is represented and integrated within the health care system

We thank the Province for recent funding announcements to deliver on the commitment of four hours of direct care for long-term care residents, as well as previously announced investments to build 30,000 new long-term care beds and provide much needed health human resource supports for the sector. We encourage the Province to further accelerate its investments and implementation of [Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan \(2021-2025\)](#) to have supports in place by 2022 to 2023. This would help address immediate and significant staffing challenges, including the need for additional resources during outbreaks and future potential waves of the pandemic, and to prepare for the planned development of new long-term care beds.

As progress continues on long-term care sector reform and implementation of the Staffing Plan, our consultations and analysis revealed additional important actions for the provincial government to consider:

- Continue to provide COVID-19 Prevention and Containment Funding for long-term care beyond March 2022; given the significant costs associated with preventing and containing the spread of COVID-19 and the impact of future waves, there is a continued need for this funding to support vital infection, prevention and control (IPAC) measures and keep staff, residents and visitors safe; without this funding, many long-term care homes will be unable to continue these practices
- Consider [recommendations](#) made by the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) that will help ensure municipal homes have full and equal access to four hours of care funding
- Consider [recommendations](#) made by AdvantAge Ontario that identify amendments to the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* to enhance resident-centred care and create a just culture in long-term care
- Implement recommendations 13, 14 and 19 from [York Region's Submission to Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission](#) which were not included in the

Commission's Final Report; these recommendations will help ensure homes have continued access to external pharmacy supports, receive High Intensity Needs Funding to support short-stay respite residents and receive accurate and up-to-date information from Home and Community Care Support Services

Although investments in long-term care are desperately needed, we must also recognize that long-term care is only one component of the full continuum of care for seniors. Investments in home and community care, affordable senior-friendly housing options and support services are required to allow seniors to remain in their homes longer and age-in-place in their communities. The Province should consider identifying and establishing a service system manager for seniors' care to coordinate and bring together the currently fragmented seniors' services sector. Organizations identified to take on this role should be supported with sufficient resourcing and funding. Continued investment in the development of Ontario Health Teams will also help to achieve stronger coordination and integration of seniors' care.

York Regional Council remains committed to working with all levels of government, community partners and sector organizations to ensure our vulnerable seniors continue to receive appropriate, respectful and compassionate care.

If you have questions or would like to further discuss, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, General Manager, Paramedic and Seniors Services, at 1-877-464-9675 extension 72090 or by email at Lisa.Gonsalves@york.ca

Sincerely,



Wayne Emmerson
Chairman and CEO

Attachment 1

Report to York Region Committee of the Whole: Analysis of Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission's Final Report and Recommendations for Urgent Provincial Action

Copy to:

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility
Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development
Hon. Merilee Fullerton, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Dr. Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister of Health
Nancy Matthews, Deputy Minister of Long-Term Care
Greg Orencsak, Deputy Minister of Finance
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Greg Meredith, Deputy Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development
Denise Cole, Deputy Minister for Seniors and Accessibility and Deputy Minister of Children, Community and Social Services