



Registered Practical Nurses  
Association of Ontario

March 30, 2020

Hon. Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Hon. Christine Elliott  
Deputy Premier & Minister of Health  
Ministry of Health  
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton  
Minister of Long-Term Care  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, 400 University Ave  
Toronto, ON M5G 1S5

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Elliott and Minister Fullerton:

**Re: Protecting community care clients and long-term care residents and staff  
during the COVID-19 pandemic**

On behalf of Registered Practical Nurses working on the frontlines of COVID-19, we are writing you with an urgent request that the provincial government take immediate action to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in long-term care (LTC) homes and amongst clients receiving community care. With a number of Ontario LTC homes already reporting outbreaks, we are calling on the government to take urgent action to prevent the further spread of this deadly disease amongst one of Ontario's most vulnerable populations.

We have seen the seriousness with which your government has treated the evolving pandemic and applaud the swift action taken to protect public safety and contain the virus. We commend the steps that your government has already taken to safeguard the well-being of those living in LTC homes and receiving nursing care in the community, including by providing pointed guidance to health providers and restricting access to non essential visitors.

Despite these efforts, we remain gravely concerned that home and community care clients and LTC residents, as well as the nurses and other health care workers who care for them, are still not adequately protected.

Therefore, we are urgently requesting that you implement the following:

1. Deploy personal protection equipment (PPE) to home and community care providers and LTC on a priority basis and ensure staff who may be less familiar with PPE are appropriately trained on its use.
2. Require that any appearance of respiratory issues is immediately treated as a suspected COVID-19 case and the appropriate precautions are taken to minimize spread.
3. Ensure testing is prioritized and fast-tracked for residents in LTC, as well as for all health care providers in these homes and those providing care in the community.



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We need to proactively take steps to ensure we are limiting the spread of this disease in LTC and in community in order to minimize the strain placed on our hospitals. The best way to keep Ontario's community care clients and long-term care residents safe is to ensure those providing care are properly protected. Thank you in advance for your attention to this immediate and pressing concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Dianne Martin  
Chief Executive Officer  
Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (WeRPN)