



Registered Practical Nurses
Association of Ontario

April 1, 2020

Dr. David Williams
Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health
21st Floor
393 University Ave
Toronto, ON M5G 2M2

Dr. Peter Donnelly
President & CEO, Public Health Ontario
Suite 300
480 University Ave
Toronto, ON M5G 1V2

Dear Dr. Williams and Dr. Donnelly:

Re: Clarification on the applicability of Directive #5 to Registered Practical Nurses in Public Hospitals

On behalf of Ontario's Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) working on the frontlines of COVID-19, I am writing to you today to request urgent clarification be made to the Ministry's recently released Directive on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for nurses in public hospitals.

All health care providers, regardless of setting, are doing everything they can to ensure the health and safety of their patients. To be able to continue to do so safely, it is essential that all frontline health care providers have access to the necessary PPE to keep patients and themselves safe.

Across Ontario's public hospitals, our nursing workforce includes both RNs and RPNs, working side by side to deliver the best care possible to patients. While the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) represents a significant number of RNs, the vast majority of RPNs working in hospitals, over 99 percent, are not represented by this union. As it currently stands, having Directive #5 apply only to ONA members, has the unintended consequence of prioritizing the protection of one nurse over another that ultimately puts thousands of RPNs, as well as the patients they care for, at risk.

Now, more than ever, we need all available nurses on the frontlines of care. However, the current directive is a grave oversight that is putting frontline nurses in an untenable situation where they have become increasingly concerned about the risk of transmission—both for themselves and the patients they care for—forcing some of them to contemplate ceasing services as a result of the lack of appropriate means and access to protection.



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Our members and other frontline providers want to continue to provide safe and effective care for their patients, but to do that, they too need to remain healthy and safe. I am calling on you to clarify the directive on the use of PPE to ensure that all frontline nurses and other front line health providers in all settings have the equipment they need.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this pressing issue and concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dianne Martin
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Hon. Christine Elliott
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health

Helen Angus
Deputy Minister of Health