



Registered Practical Nurses
Association of Ontario

April 16, 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

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Elliott:

Re: Protecting home and community care providers and clients during the COVID-19 pandemic

On behalf of Ontario's Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) working on the frontlines of COVID-19, I am writing to you today with an urgent request that the provincial government take immediate action to combat the spread of COVID-19 amongst home and community care (HCC) providers and their clients.

We have seen the urgency with which your government is responding to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in order to ensure the health and wellbeing of Ontarians. We applaud the swift action being taken to procure and supply the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline workers as the outbreak continues to evolve, as well as the pointed guidance that has been offered to health providers in vulnerable sectors like Long Term Care.

Despite these efforts, we remain concerned that Ontario's HCC clients, as well as the nurses and other health care workers who care for them, are not adequately protected against COVID-19. HCC providers routinely visit clients' homes to provide necessary care, and often visit multiple homes each day. Without proper protection for Ontario's HCC workers, the risk of COVID-19 community spread across HCC clients, many of whom are members of vulnerable populations, is very high. An outbreak of COVID-19 within the HCC sector also risks further overloading Ontario's hospitals if clients are unable to receive necessary support in their homes and are forced to turn to hospitals for care.

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, including HCC workers, have access to the necessary PPE to keep patients and themselves safe.



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To further combat the spread of COVID-19 in the HCC sector, we are urgently requesting that your government take the following actions:

1. Allow HCC providers to conduct assessments of clients before entering their homes, which will allow providers to choose the most appropriate PPE based on that assessment.
2. Deploy PPE to HCC providers on a priority basis.
3. Require that any appearance of respiratory issues among HCC clients is immediately treated as a suspected COVID-19 case, so that the appropriate precautions are taken to minimize spread.
4. Ensure testing is prioritized and fast-tracked for HCC providers and their clients.

We must continue to take proactive steps such as those outlined above to ensure that we limit the spread of COVID-19 in the HCC sector and the community, in order to minimize the strain on our hospitals. The best way to keep Ontario's HCC clients safe is to ensure that frontline workers who are providing direct care are properly protected.

We thank you for your government's continued leadership and the actions you have taken to date to protect Ontarians and frontline workers during this unprecedented time. We also greatly appreciate you turning your attention to this immediate and pressing concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dianne Martin".

Dianne Martin
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Helen Angus
Deputy Minister of Health

Matthew Anderson
President and CEO, Ontario Health