



COVID-19 Update

Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2020
To: HHS staff and physicians
From: Rob Maclsaac, President and CEO
Subject: **Our help is critically needed: request for volunteers**

We are seeking volunteers from HHS to support long term care and retirement homes critically in need of help. This request is open to everyone at HHS who can provide clinical support. You can forward your expression of interest to supportLTC@hpsc.ca.

The toll of the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected Ontario's long-term care and retirement homes. Over the past few weeks, there have been numerous media reports about the challenges faced by our colleagues and residents in this sector as they combat the virus. At the same time, you may have also become aware that the provincial government has asked hospitals to strengthen our community's efforts to care for frail and elderly residents.

Throughout the pandemic, HHS has accepted Covid-19 positive LTC/retirement home residents into our hospitals; provided assistance with volunteer staffing resources from our Nursing Resource Team; and contributed much needed PPE. Also, together with other community partners, we launched an initiative which virtually connects LTC/retirement home providers with ED physicians, and other medical specialists and clinical teams.

In response to new provincial requests and guidelines, and more importantly, because it is the right thing to do, we will be deploying resources to LTC/retirement homes in our area to support testing, outbreak management and other staffing requirements beginning with homes that are deemed most at risk. This work is being coordinated collaboratively by with many of our partners here in Hamilton including most notably Public Health. Similar efforts are occurring across the Ontario West region.

The appropriate PPE, education and orientation will be provided, and your normal remuneration and benefits will remain in place (staff will essentially be seconded temporarily on a time-limited basis (TBD), and maintain their employment status with HHS). Additionally, in accordance with Public Health policy, hospital volunteer workers will be able to continue working at both the hospital and LTC home provided all PPE precautions are followed.

Thanks in advance for considering this very important request and my sincerest thanks to each of you for your relentless efforts to contain this virus and keep our patients, our community and each other safe.