



June 5, 2020

To: Residents, Family Members, and Staff
of AON LTC and Retirement Homes

COVID-19 Update

It has been a couple of weeks since our last organizational update and, in many ways, not much has changed. For the most part this is good news.

Ontario's state of emergency remains in place, even as more businesses and activities begin to cautiously re-open. Businesses and individuals are learning new ways to do things, which seem a little less foreign with each passing day. In the media, stories about widespread protests have supplanted most of the COVID-19 stories in the headlines.

In the long-term care and retirement sectors, we have seen some encouraging signs and much reason for optimism over the past couple of weeks. COVID-19 testing has ramped up in a serious way. It is now a clear and much needed provincial priority. Incidence rates and other important metrics are improving. In the regions in which AON's Homes operate, things have been stable, with outbreaks being resolved and fewer new cases identified each passing day.

But the threat is not over. As of this week, there are still more than 100 active outbreaks in LTC Homes in Ontario, and 30 in retirement homes. Five new LTC outbreaks emerged just last weekend. Tragically, the death toll in LTC has surpassed 1600. Recently the media seems to be noting the significant risk, world-wide, that COVID-19 represents to seniors. This, frankly, has been known by many from the start. In March we told our staff that **the risk to persons over the age of 80 is 200X greater** than to a person in their twenties. That remains true today.

So with that sobering context we need to remind all of you that our protections of our residents remain firmly in place. Provincially mandated ***visitor restrictions continue to be in effect at all long-term care and retirement homes***. The procedures that AON has established in its Homes, both provincially mandated or otherwise, are still in effect. Like everyone else we hope we are past the worst of it, but we continue to be vigilant. A single asymptomatic person, unaware that they carry the virus, can devastate a seniors' residence. *Don't let it be you.*

On to some brief updates ...

Outbreaks

As reported previously, the defense against the virus has been excellent at all AON Homes. Not a single resident has been identified as COVID-positive, across six Homes and almost 700 residents. And we have had only a single, community-acquired, COVID case amongst our staff.

Surveillance Testing

Our LTC and retirement homes have undergone extensive “surveillance testing” in recent weeks, once it became a provincial priority. This includes both residents and staff. More than 2,000 tests have been completed recently in six AON Homes, and all have been negative. Status has been challenging to track and share with you, since Public Health now only reports positive cases.

Plans for testing staff became even more aggressive this week, with the announcement that *all staff in LTC Homes in Ontario will be tested every two weeks*. Our own nursing staff will be doing the testing this time, so we will be able to track the results more closely. We anticipate that an announcement of similar testing of staff in retirement homes may follow shortly.

Pandemic Pay

The province’s Pandemic Pay program for non-management staff is unfolding, albeit slowly. The program includes an additional \$4/hour over a sixteen week period, as well as \$250 lump sum payments for those who work more than 100 hours in designated four-week periods. Unless something changes, we expect funds to be advanced to employers by the end of June. We will then distribute the funds to staff within a few days after that.

Thank You

We want to thank all residents and family member for their patience and understanding as we work together through this unprecedented time. We appreciate all of the well-wishes and the many touching signs of support. We have learned new ways of doing things together, including 1,000 – 2,000 virtual visits via FaceTime or Skype that our staff have arranged between residents and their loved ones. And we thank our employees, once again, for their dedication and commitment to both our residents and to each other. We clearly have a great team and much to be proud of. *By “Caring Together”, we are beating this thing.*

Be well and stay safe. Visit our website or follow @AON_responds on Twitter for news and information. Or visit our FaceBook pages or watch AONtv to stay connected with our residents.

Tim Harrold

Tim Harrold, Senior Vice President – AON Inc.