



May 21, 2020

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

COVID-19 Update

The province has gradually begun the process of reopening, with certain stores now able to open, and things like parks and golf courses allowing people to enjoy the improving weather. It is a cautious process, however, with restrictions still in place in areas of greater health risk. Restaurants and bars remain essentially closed, as do schools, which have begun the process of planning for how to operate safely in the fall.

Ontario's seniors face a far, far greater risk from COVID-19 than do all other groups. As a result, for now, special protections remain in place in all long-term care and retirement homes. Some Homes in the GTA and Ottawa have faced significant crises, with tragic loss of life and serious staff shortages. Thankfully, we have been more fortunate locally. But we need to stay vigilant – especially as we face a large migration into cottage-country as June approaches.

As a result, ***visitor restrictions remain in place at all long-term care and retirement homes in the province.*** In fact, all of the safety protocols that were established over the past couple of months, and via the province's April 15th "Action Plan" for seniors, remain in place. Screening of both staff and residents continues twice each day, including temperature checks; staff are assigned to single work-sites, and universal masking policies continue. Long-term care and retirement homes remain a provincial priority for both COVID-testing and access to PPE.

So, with that broad introduction, I will provide a couple brief updates on other matters:

Outbreaks

All AON Homes continue to do an outstanding job of keeping COVID-19 outside of their doors. Not a single resident has been identified as COVID-positive to-date, across six Homes and almost 700 residents. We have had one employee contract COVID-19 in the community, and testing confirmed no spread of the virus to coworkers or residents.

Surveillance Testing

Testing in LTC and retirement homes became a priority in Ontario in recent weeks, including “surveillance testing” of all residents and staff. Over the past month about 1500 tests have been completed in six AON Homes, and all have been negative.

Unfortunately Public Health no longer shares the results with us, so we cannot tell if all the tests are complete. We now only hear about confirmed positive cases, and since it has been about ten days since the most recent surveillance tests (at Royal, Princess, and Canterbury Gardens), we have to assume that most are done. (Anecdotally test results come back anywhere from two days to two weeks, with resident results generally being quicker than staff results.) We wish we could say more or be more definitive, but we just have not been given the information.

Staff Supports

As communicated previously, AON is sponsoring pay-advances, cooperative child-care, and a 15% COVID outbreak pay-premium. We have also partnered with community groups to supply staff with cloth masks for personal use and “Essential Worker” cards to take advantage of community support programs. The Province will be paying an additional \$4/hour as Pandemic Pay, for a sixteen week period, and a couple of other incentives. The provincial programs have not yet been rolled out to employers for payment to employees. We understand that the groups who are eligible have undergone revision, with many government ministries involved, so the process has likely been complicated. We expect progress soon on this front.

Staying in Touch Remotely

With visitor restrictions still in place, I again encourage you to stay in touch with our residents via tools like FaceTime or Skype. We have arranged hundreds of interactions so far during the pandemic and our staff will happily assist you in connecting with your loved one. And of course please follow your Home of interest on FaceBook.

In addition, we have a new way to keep engaged with what is going on in our Homes. Each Home has its own dedicated television channel, called AONtv. It shows the activities and events going on in the Home, information bulletins, meal menus for today and tomorrow, and photos of life in the Home. You can access AONtv via the internet, if you wish, to keep up to date with happenings in your loved one’s world. We will be sharing that internet access with you shortly.

Finally, for daily news/information regarding COVID-19 and any AON Home, please visit the web-page: <https://aoninc.com/covid19-communications.php> or follow @AON_responds on Twitter.

Be well and stay safe.

Tim Harrold

Tim Harrold, Senior Vice President – AON Inc.