



May 7, 2020

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

COVID-19 Update

With so much attention recently on the impact that COVID-19 has had on long-term care and retirement homes in Ontario, it is more important than ever to keep you informed. That is the purpose of this update. Today I will focus on some key themes.

Outbreaks

So far, all AON Homes have done an excellent job of keeping COVID-19 outside of their doors. We congratulate our staff on their diligent efforts in this regard. I won't repeat all the infection prevention measures we have in place, but they seem to be working. There have been 2 declared "outbreaks" in AON Homes – both short-lived – *and both now resolved*. Not a single resident has been identified as COVID-positive to-date, across six Homes and almost 700 residents.

At Empress Gardens, we spent a few days in outbreak *due to a lab-error*. As announced by Public Health, a false-positive test was identified and the outbreak should not have occurred in the first place. This is obviously very distressing for all concerned. The "benefit" of having been declared in-outbreak is that all residents and all staff of both Moira Place and Empress Gardens received expedited testing, and all test results have been negative (clear of COVID-19). Based on these results, Moira Place is now out of outbreak. The lone confirmed case was identified in a staff member and is considered to be community-acquired.

Surveillance Testing

As shared with you previously, a key element of the Province's action plan is "surveillance testing" of all residents and staff in all LTC and retirement homes in Ontario. This is a very positive step since it will help to root out any unidentified and asymptomatic cases. Royal, Princess, and Canterbury Gardens are scheduled for this on May 9th, 10th, and 11th.

We are hopeful of continued good results. Many homes in the province are unfortunately finding COVID cases through this process. That said, Centennial Place was the first home in this region to experience surveillance testing, and every one of the 266 tests came back negative (clear).

The surveillance test results come back quickly for residents. The staff results may take a few days. The process is voluntary, but we strongly encourage all residents and all staff to participate in the testing. It is a valuable step in the infection prevention process.

Staff Supports

We are pleased to see that some staff are taking advantage of the pay-advances and the cooperative child-care plan sponsored by AON. The Province has also announced 16 weeks of Pandemic Pay for all front-line staff in the amount of \$4/hour, as well as special access to child-care services. The details and timing of the Pandemic Pay have not yet been released. AON is also paying a 15% premium at Homes in a COVID outbreak. Both Empress Gardens and Moira Place staff qualified for this (even though in Empress' case it was not truly an outbreak).

We've also seen many kind gestures from the communities we serve. Keep an eye on each Home's FaceBook page for details, but a notable item was the donation of 700+ hand-made masks to our staff for use after work as they get groceries or do other essential tasks. We want to thank Ptbo Mask Makers, #SewBetterTogether, and a group of Peterborough Curling Club members for this wonderful gesture. Tim Hortons is also delivering coffee and goodies to selected homes in their markets as part of a province-wide initiative to support health care.

Pandemic Supplies (PPE)

We have heard lots in the news about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff. This includes such things as masks, gloves, gowns, and disinfectants. I am pleased to say that we have not run out of any needed supplies. Our Nursing Consultant and VP Finance took on the challenge of obtaining PPE, working tirelessly to make sure our staff have what they need. We have been nervous at times about our ability to resupply certain items, but have been able to acquire what we need. All told we have spent more than \$100,000 on extra supplies over the last 8 weeks or so, obtaining, for example, almost 100,000 masks – with more on the horizon. The tightest resupply item at present is gowns, but we have various solutions in sight.

In closing, 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. And I encourage you to stay in touch with your loved ones via tools like FaceTime or Skype. We have many residents taking part in this activity and our staff will happily assist you.

We will continue to be vigilant and keep the health and safety of our residents and staff as job #1. Please note that visitor restrictions remain in place, by Order of the provincial government. Thank you for your understanding and for your ongoing support. Be well and stay safe.

Tim Harrold

Tim Harrold, Senior Vice President – AON Inc.