

May 19, 2020

COVID-19: Ontario Government Calls for Independent Commission for Long-Term Care Homes

Dear residents and long-term care team members,

On May 19th, Minister Fullerton, Ontario's Minister of Long-Term Care announced that the questions that Ontarians have had during the COVID-19 crisis in long-term care homes will be addressed by way of an independent Commission set to begin in September. Few details have been released at this point.

Minister Fullerton reiterated that the long-term care home system in Ontario 'is broken' and that quick, non-partisan, and decisive action is required. While the mandate, timeline and membership of the Commission has not been announced, it appears that the focus for the work is to provide government with "guidance on how to improve the long-term care system and better protect residents and staff from any future outbreaks."

I spoke with our government in the afternoon of May 19th about the Commission. I iterated strongly that as membership for the Commission is decided upon, OARC must be part of the process. You have my commitment that OARC will, to the greatest extent possible, inform the work and outcomes of the Commission. As this important review process begins, and we reflect on what must change, we must always do so with an eye towards residents' lived experience. If changes do not positively impact residents, then work is done in vain.

Attached is the complete news release from government regarding the forthcoming Commission.

Yours truly,



Dee Lender
Executive Director

Ontario Announces Independent Commission into Long-Term Care

Government commits to improving system following COVID-19 outbreak

May 19, 2020 9:00 A.M.

TORONTO — Today, Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care, issued the following statement in response to the impact of COVID-19 in Ontario's long-term care homes: "Our government has been clear that we will review the long-term care system to get a better understanding of the impacts and responses to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Today, I am announcing that we will be launching an independent commission into Ontario's long-term care system beginning in September.

Over the next several months, our government will be finalizing details of the commission including terms of reference, membership, leadership of the commission and reporting timelines.

We have been clear the long-term care system in Ontario is broken. We must act quickly and decisively, and that is why an independent non-partisan commission is the best way to conduct a thorough and expedited review.

As we all take steps to contain this pandemic, the Commission will get down to work and provide us with guidance on how to improve the long-term care system and better protect residents and staff from any future outbreaks.

Since day one of COVID-19, our top priority has been to protect the health and safety of all Ontarians. That includes the most vulnerable members of our society like residents in long-term care.

Our government offers our condolences to the families who lost a loved one to COVID-19 while residing in a long-term care home.

Ontarians need and deserve answers, and let me assure you, they will get them."

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Retrieved on May 19, 2020 from <https://news.ontario.ca/mltc/en/2020/05/ontario-announces-independent-commission-into-long-term-care.html>