

ADDENDUM TO THE LONG-TERM CARE REPORT

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Prepared for: Health Committee

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INFORMATION

15. COVID-19 Vaccine

The government has committed to offering first vaccine doses to all long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care residents across Ontario by February 10, 2021. We are pleased to report that Bonnechere Manor residents were vaccinated on February 7th (94%) and Miramichi Lodge residents were vaccinated on February 8th (96%).

16. Rapid Surveillance Testing (PanBio)

At the same time we are focused on the vaccination plan of residents, staff and Essential Care Givers (ECGs), we have been directed by the Province to implement onsite rapid testing for surveillance of staff and visitors by February 22, 2021. While we support this important advancement in earlier detection of asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic risks, this will be challenging given human and physical space resources. The government has expanded the list of non-regulated healthcare professionals who can perform the PanBio tests to, for example, Personal Support Workers (PSWs) but given the provincial shortage of PSWs for direct resident care our Homes will need to focus on hiring qualified retired and/or new staff.

It is unlikely we will have sufficient resources to fully implement by February 22nd so we will start with staff testing and work towards the ultimate goal to extend to essential caregivers (ECGs) and eventually all visitors. Therefore, at this time, there is no change for testing for ECGs – they will continue to be tested through the Renfrew County Virtual Triage Assessment Centre (VTAC) at the frequency required by the Province, which will be reduced to every two weeks once in green zone. The Province has also directed the frequency of rapid testing when it begins: two (2) times per week for staff and at each visit for ECGs/visitors when they are permitted. We are pleased to see that the requirements for support

workers, caregivers and general visitors do not need to be followed in an emergency or palliative situation.

Once rapid antigen testing programs are fully operational in long-term care homes, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing will continue to be used only in instances where individuals are symptomatic or have a positive antigen test result, individuals have been in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, a Home is in outbreak, or as otherwise directed by local public health. The Ministry of Long-Term Care has confirmed that costs, including for additional staffing that are incurred for the purposes of surveillance testing including point of care testing, are eligible expenses under the Prevention and Containment Fund.

17. Third-Party Oversight for Screening

On January 19, 2021, long-term care homes were informed of a provincial directive and funding to hire “third party security guards” to perform screening of staff and visitors to the Homes. The majority of Homes found this requirement concerning, offensive and duplicative given that our screening protocols have been in place for almost a year and working successfully to prevent the community transmission of COVID-19 into our Homes. Additionally, it is noted that the County of Renfrew Long-Term Care Homes have an added layer of screening risk management to reduce potential screening human error - we have implemented a screening app that is loaded with the provincial long-term care screening tool, which must be completed by the individual and then confirmed by the screener. We were informed that the rationale for this sudden change was based on anecdotal reports of some family members across the Province stating they had not been screened upon entry to the Home. We, along with many other long-term care advocates including Advantage Ontario and the Champlain Family Council Network as per letter attached as Appendix LTC-VIII, believed strongly that if the Ministry has received reports of specific homes that have inadequate screening procedures; immediate action should be taken to correct the specific problem rather than committing millions of dollars to fix a largely non-existent or non-systemic problem. The few Homes that are having problems could then be required to hire security guards or third-party screeners from the Ministry’s approved list of suppliers.

I am pleased to advise you that the Ministry of Long-Term Care has made significant concessions on this item as of February 5, 2021 - most importantly that Homes may use a vendor of their own choosing or a dedicated hire of their own and do not need to be security personnel and/or uniformed which now meets the County of Renfrew Long-Term Care Homes approach we have had in place since 2020.

RESOLUTIONS

18. Business Case – Long-Term Care Homes COVID-19 Screening Coordinators

Recommendation: THAT the Health Committee recommend to County Council that the Homes hire contract Part-Time COVID-19 Screener Coordinator positions to fulfill the new COVID-19 screening oversight requirement as well as implementation of rapid testing of staff and visitors seven days a week effective February 22, 2021 until further notice at an estimated cost of \$155,598 for Bonnechere Manor and \$155,598 for Miramichi Lodge funded by the Testing Adherence Program Funding and the Emergency and Containment Funding, if required. Further, that the Finance & Administrative Committee be so advised.

Background

As per items # 16 and 17 above, in order to fulfill the ongoing requirement of active COVID-19 screening and the new requirements to provide screening oversight as well as implement rapid COVID-19 testing, Committee and Council approval is required to temporarily hire part-time contract Screener Coordinators for these purposes as outlined in the Business Case attached as Appendix LTC-IX.