

Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA) Statement on One-Year Anniversary of the Declaration of the COVID-19 Pandemic:

As we mark the one-year anniversary of the World Health Organization's (WHO) declaration of a global pandemic, COVID-19 continues to have wide-ranging effects on our world. Despite this shifting landscape, ORCA members remain committed to the safety and protection of the seniors who live in our communities, their families, and the staff who provide their care.

Of the 773 retirement homes in Ontario, as of today, 94.2 per cent are free of outbreaks of any kind including COVID-19. Despite this outcome and our best efforts in the ongoing fight against COVID-19, we have experienced loss. As an Association and as individuals, our hearts go out to all those who have been affected. With that in mind, it is important to note that since the declaration of the global pandemic, 94.4 per cent of all seniors living in Ontario retirement communities have stayed safe as a result of the heroic efforts of our operators and remained free of COVID-19.

Leading into and in response to the pandemic, ORCA members work to find balance – to ensure a sense of community, social connection, and meaningful interaction, while offering peace of mind both to seniors and their family members who have entrusted us with the health and well-being of their loved ones. To those seniors and their families, thank you for your trust and the choice to call an ORCA community your home.

On the date of this significant milestone, I must also acknowledge the unwavering dedication by which our members' staff teams provide care and support for their residents. Throughout the pandemic, I have witnessed those efforts and for that sacrifice and commitment, they should be commended.

The initial rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in retirement homes has already made a lifesaving difference and provided an effective means to prevent further spread of the virus. While the Province works to distribute vaccines widely, COVID-19 remains a threat and we implore all Ontarians to remain vigilant, maintain physical distancing and mandatory masking in all public places, and continue to adhere to guidance from your local public health officials.

On behalf of operators who are working tirelessly for the continued safety of seniors and staff living and working in retirement homes, we thank the provincial government for its ongoing commitment to keeping Ontarians safe and look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Hecimovich".

Cathy Hecimovich
CEO, Ontario Retirement Communities Association