

The Ontario Retirement Communities Association Calls on the Ontario Government to Make COVID-19 Vaccinations Mandatory for All Health Care Workers

Oakville – Today, Cathy Hecimovich, CEO of the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA), on behalf of the ORCA Board and the 60,000 seniors who choose to live in retirement homes, issued the following statement urging the Ontario government to make COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory for all health care workers.

“COVID-19 variants continue to present an ongoing threat to our most vulnerable people. The Delta variant is rapidly spreading amongst unvaccinated individuals. We know that the number one defense against COVID-19 is a vaccine, and it is saving lives. This government’s willingness to take swift action to protect seniors is once again needed. We want to thank the government for making very difficult decisions throughout the pandemic in order to keep residents safe across the province.

On behalf of our members, we are urging the Ontario Government to make COVID-19 vaccines mandatory for all health care workers, including retirement home staff and any other external healthcare providers coming into retirement homes in order to keep our residents and retirement home staff safe.

As of today, nearly 100% of our 60,000 residents, 92% of essential caregivers, and 74% of 30,000 staff employed by retirement homes are fully vaccinated.

Close to 50% of seniors who reside in retirement homes receive publicly funded services from home care workers. Unfortunately, we don’t have access to the vaccination status of external healthcare providers, including home care workers, coming into retirement homes which is resulting in a significant risk to our residents. The continuum of care must offer seniors a united front of protection.

In addition, we call on the Government to accelerate all efforts to provide direction in regard to booster shots that may be required this Fall for our seniors and our staff who received their first doses close to 8 months ago now.

Mandatory vaccinations for all healthcare workers will save lives, protect seniors and vulnerable individuals and enable our residents to remain safe and prevent social isolation associated with any further lockdowns.”

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About ORCA:

Since 1977, the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA) has been the voice of Ontario’s retirement communities and we remain committed to setting a standard for operational

excellence in the sector.

ORCA is a voluntary, not-for-profit association that represents more than 95% of all licensed retirement community suites in Ontario, with members caring for nearly 60,000 seniors who choose to call retirement communities their home. Further, ORCA members employ over 30,000 Ontarians who are steadfast in their devotion to the difference the sector can make to each of its residents.

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