

May 31, 2020

Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA) response to Executive Order extending the Retirement Home Regulatory Authority's (RHRA) oversight of sector:

As COVID-19 remains a threat to all Ontarians, including those living in retirement settings, our hearts go out to all those who have been affected. The safety and protection of the seniors who live in our communities, their families, and the staff who provide their care are our first priority.

Every retirement home is unique and has been affected by COVID-19 differently. As an Association, we understand that an extension of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority's (RHRA) oversight to allow the Province to take over management of a home may be required in exceptional situations. Should the need arise, ORCA supports this measure as an appropriate response to these atypical circumstances.

Of the 770 retirement homes in this province right now, 94 percent are free of outbreaks of any kind including COVID-19. Proactive surveillance testing done in retirement homes, not in outbreak, by Public Health Ontario has demonstrated that there is a 0.2 percent incidence of COVID-19 positive testing in staff and residents.

The outcomes of the retirement sector in minimizing transmission risk reflect the urgency in which our members and their employees moved to enhance their already existing infection procedures to pandemic levels in addition to revising daily activities to implement social distancing and outbreak protocols when required. Our members do this because they take the heightened risk of COVID-19 to their residents as their highest responsibility.

ORCA and its members are fully committed to the processes and protocols enacted by the RHRA, the directives of the Medical Officer of Health and the guidance of local Public Health authorities. ORCA has actively worked with the regulator to encourage compliance and ensure the protection and wellbeing of seniors living in retirement communities through the provision of enhanced member communication, education, and resources which support compliance with RHRA standards.

Leading into and in response to the pandemic ORCA and its members have worked closely with the Premier's Office, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, the Ministry of Health, Public Health and Ontario Health as well as other health sector partners to ensure the safety and protection of our staff and our seniors has been at the forefront of all that we do. We applaud and thank the government for their focus on retirement homes and their tireless efforts to keep our seniors and staff safe and protected.



About the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA):

Since 1977, the Ontario Retirement Communities Association has been the voice of Ontario's retirement communities and we remain committed to setting a standard of operational excellence in the sector.

For more information, please visit our website: www.orcaretirement.com

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