

MEDIA RELEASE

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Extending care beyond the hospital into long-term care, other homes

As residents living in long-term care and retirement homes continue to be heavily impacted by COVID-19, Niagara Health is moving quickly to mobilize support and help protect our community's most vulnerable citizens.

The provincial government announced a number of measures over the weekend, including an Emergency Order to support long-term care homes heavily impacted by COVID-19.

Niagara Health is taking a leadership role in this humanitarian response, working with our community partners from public health, home and community care, primary care, EMS, and long-term care.

"Hospital healthcare workers are highly trained in infection prevention and control and are uniquely positioned to safely and expertly respond to these challenging environments," says Lynn Guerriero, Niagara Health President. "While our involvement will extend to all levels of response, we will be most involved in responses to individual homes where assessment and stabilization support is required."

The response will be scaled to each individual home's needs and will include clinical consultation, supporting staffing needs and the management of outbreaks to help stabilize care and the environment for residents and staff.

"Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Niagara Health is moving quickly to create a roster of healthcare workers who can be redeployed to local homes needing our help," says Derek McNally, Niagara Health Executive Vice President Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Executive. "In addition to the two teams that have conducted on-site assessments, several front-line healthcare workers recently provided staffing support to area homes."

The Niagara Health team has worked very hard to respond to COVID-19 cases in the hospital in a safe and controlled manner. Decisions on staff assignments will take into account the needs of the hospital and be mindful of our responsibility to continue providing the community with safe, quality care to patients in our care.

"The continued spread of the virus within long-term care homes and other group settings in Niagara poses a significant threat to the health of residents of those homes and to the broader healthcare system," says Ms. Guerriero. "I am grateful for the outstanding work of the NH team, and I'm confident they will continue to make a positive difference in the lives of those most impacted by this virus."

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