



Media Release – Action plan for Forest Heights Long Term Care Home in Kitchener

April 20, 2020

Forest Heights Long Term Care home is experiencing a substantial outbreak of COVID-19. After the home's 240 residents were tested proactively by Region of Waterloo Public Health (ROWPH), as part of the new whole home testing protocol, a total of 101 residents and 40 staff were confirmed positive for COVID-19.

The team at Forest Heights has been working very closely with Region of Waterloo Public Health (ROWPH) officials on pandemic outbreak protocols since the beginning of the outbreak, providing information and implementing recommendations on infection prevention and control and case management.

The ROWPH and Forest Heights teams confer daily about a range of issues, including resident care and staffing. This weekend, they were joined by Ontario Health's Waterloo-Wellington Health System Response team to explore system-wide options for Forest Heights.

Taking into consideration best clinical practices, the group proactively agreed on a plan to move some residents out of the home and into hospital, which will allow steps needed during outbreak such as better cohorting, deep cleaning and more efficient isolation of residents in Forest Heights, while also providing some relief to the Forest Heights staff.

All three local hospitals, Grand River Hospital, St. Mary's General Hospital and Cambridge Memorial Hospital, have volunteered to accept the potential transfers of residents. Together, we plan to move approximately 40 residents temporarily into the most appropriate available hospital beds. The decision to move some residents out of the home demonstrates the high level of professional collaboration that exists in the Waterloo Region's wider healthcare system.

With several employees off work ill or in isolation for COVID-19, the entire Forest Heights team, from nursing staff and personal support workers to culinary, recreation, environmental and administrative services staff have been working incredibly hard, long hours to care for our residents.

"We truly appreciate the spirit of creativity and collaboration that all our partners in Waterloo-Wellington have shown in putting together this plan," said Dr. Rhonda Collins, Chief Medical Officer, Revera. "This will provide some much needed relief to the staff at Forest Heights, who have been working fearlessly and tirelessly to manage this unprecedented pandemic outbreak."



The hospitals will offer the same level of surveillance, monitoring and care for residents until they are able to return to the home.

The operational plan to move the residents is as follows:

- Determine which residents are most medically appropriate to be moved.
- Consult and seek consent from residents and their families about the move.
- Transport of residents from the home to hospital by appropriate transportation methods over the next two days.
- Support and care for the residents by hospital staff.
- Return of residents to Forest Heights at the appropriate time

“We are very grateful to Region of Waterloo Public Health, the Waterloo-Wellington Health System Response Team and the local hospitals for working with us to find the best way to serve our Forest Heights residents and staff,” added Dr. Collins.

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