



Media statement – Ministry ends management order for Forest Heights Long Term Care Home in Kitchener

St. Mary's and Revera are grateful for the outpouring of support from the community, families and friends of residents

Kitchener, ON – September 14, 2020 – On Friday, September 11, the Ministry of Long-Term Care lifted the mandatory management order that was in place since June 2, 2020 at Forest Heights Long Term Care Home in Kitchener, Ontario. Management of the home, which was assigned for 90 days to St. Mary's General Hospital, reverts back to Revera Inc.

The order was issued to provide much-needed assistance to the home, which had been battling an extremely complex and challenging outbreak of COVID-19 under the guidance of Region of Waterloo Public Health and with the support of local hospitals. The outbreak was declared over on June 30.

“The teams from Forest Heights, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Health System worked quickly and collaboratively to execute the action plan we submitted to the Ministry of Long-Term Care,” said Lee Fairclough, president of St. Mary's General Hospital. “We were pleased to support the Forest Heights team in stabilizing the home, re-starting services and bringing home the residents who had been moved to local hospitals during the outbreak.”

They express thanks to cross sector partners for embracing this effort throughout, including Waterloo Region Public Health, local hospitals who supported residents (Grand River Hospital and Cambridge Memorial Hospital), community partners, and co-leads for Waterloo Region's Pandemic Response Tri-ad, Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang and Dr. Sharon Bal, and colleagues at Ontario Health West.

The action plan's goals were to end the outbreak, safeguard the health and safety of residents and staff at Forest Heights, support the care of Forest Heights' residents and stabilize the home. All items on the action plan have been completed.

Revera extends its sincere appreciation to the teams from St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, who provided much-needed support for Forest Heights staff and managers who were exhausted after working tirelessly under extremely stressful circumstances to battle the devastating virus.

“This pandemic has underscored the importance of partnership,” said Wendy Gilmour, senior vice president of Long Term Care at Revera. “The many different players in the health care system can't stand alone – we all must work together to improve experiences for



people through integrated care. We are grateful that we now have a very close relationship with St. Mary's, and look forward to an enduring collaboration with their expert teams.”

In addition, the management and staff of Forest Heights wish to express their gratitude for the outpouring of support from the community and from the families and friends of residents. Their words and gestures of support provided much-needed encouragement during a very difficult time.

About the outbreak

- Outbreak declared: April 1, 2020
- Outbreak declared over: June 30, 2020
- Capacity of home prior to pandemic: 240
- Number of residents decanted to local hospitals during the outbreak: 43
- Capacity of home following re-design and reduced number of beds per room: 168
- Current occupancy of home: 152

Contingencies in place for a potential second wave

- A stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- A three-bed isolation area
- A new infection prevention and control (IPAC) specialist on staff and enhanced IPAC practices
- A liaison with the community hospitals
- An enduring relationship with St. Mary's, including ongoing touch points on IPAC, building services, procurement
- Above-complement staffing

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