



To: Hospital CEOs
From: Matthew Anderson, President and CEO, Ontario Health
Date: April 28th, 2021
Re: **Transfers from hospitals to long-term care homes during major surge**

As you know, we continue to experience extreme pressure on our hospitals as a result of widespread transmission of COVID-19 in many parts of the province.

Through the work of the Ontario Critical Care COVID-19 Command Centre and the Regional Incident Management System (IMS) structures, we have seen how important it is to transfer patients across hospitals in order to provide equitable care across the province and balance the hospital system, ensuring capacity is available where it is needed. Despite these efforts, capacity challenges remain in many of our hospitals. As a result, it has become necessary to identify ways to allow for additional capacity to be created in major surge situations.

Recognizing that there are currently 5,400 vacant long-term care beds in the province, and in response to requests from our hospitals, today the Government of Ontario [amended O. Reg 272/21](#) to facilitate the transfer of patients that have been designated as alternate level of care (ALC) with a discharge destination of long-term care to either a long-term care home or a retirement home through a temporary, emergency-based removal of individual consent requirements.

We are committed to a patient-centred approach and recognize the impact these transfers may have on patients and their families. We have processes in place to ensure patients are receiving care in the right place and will exhaust all options before transferring patients under this order. If needed, the application of this order would be facilitated through processes that are established by the Ontario Critical Care COVID-19 Command Centre, in collaboration with Ontario Health Regions and Home and Community Care Support Services, and long-term care home partners.

This order will only be used in a major surge, enabling the hospital to optimize the availability of its critical care and acute care resources, or assist another hospital in optimizing the availability of such resources.

Webinars will be held this week for leaders in the hospital and long-term care sectors to provide more information about how transfers under this order will be facilitated if needed.

Thank you again for your continued partnership during this critical time for our health system.

Matthew Anderson