

May 5, 2020

Mr. Allan H. Malek, R.Ph.
Executive VP and Chief Pharmacy Office
155 University Avenue, Suite 600
Toronto ON M5H 3B7

Dear Mr. Malek:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Ontario Pharmacists Association recommendations in response to COVID-19 affecting pharmacy service providers in long-term care homes.

The Ministry of Long-Term Care (the Ministry) recognizes the current challenges and severe capacity pressures in long-term care homes as a result of COVID-19. In response, the Ministry has amended provisions in the Ontario Regulation 79/10 (the Regulation) under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* to increase flexibility for the operators while ensuring the continued safety and well-being of residents and staff.

Currently, all licensees of long-term care homes are focused on providing essential services and urgent care needs of their residents and taking action in order to prevent, mitigate, and contain COVID-19. Under the Regulation, every licensee must ensure that the pharmacy service provider for the home participates in certain activities including drug destruction and disposal under clause 136 (3) (a) if required by the licensee's policy. The Regulation does not indicate a timeline in which the drugs and controlled substances must be destroyed. We encourage pharmacy services to work with licensees of long-term care homes to store drugs that are to be disposed of until the pandemic is over, or utilizing a visiting physician as permitted by the Regulation. The Regulation provides licensees with flexibility to limit visiting pharmacy personnel during outbreaks. Furthermore, the provisions for pharmacists and pharmacy services set out in the Regulation do not need to be conducted on-site.

Where there is a contractual agreement or licensee requirement to have pharmacy personnel attend on-site, the Ministry would encourage pharmacy services to work with licensees of long-term care homes together to make alternate arrangements.

Sincerely,



Brian Pollard
Assistant Deputy Minister

- c: Ms. Michelle-Ann Hylton, Director, Licensing, Policy and Development Branch,
Ministry of Long-Term Care
Mr. Justin Bates, CEO, Ontario Pharmacists Association
Ms. Kacie Lunn, Chair, Ontario Pharmacists Association Long-Term Care Working Group
Ms. Jen Baker, Chair, Ontario Pharmacists Association Board of Directors