

To:	Chair and Members of the Committee of Management
Committee Date:	May 11, 2021
Subject / Report No:	LTCR-CM-12-21
Title:	AMO Recommendations Update
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Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	Adopted as Presented by Committee of Management CM20-21; Endorsed by County Council CC46-21

Recommendation

1. That report **LTCR-CM-12-21 regarding an AMO Recommendations Update** be received for information.

Background/Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and disproportionate impact on residents in Long-Term Care (LTC), with a larger proportion of the current deaths attributed to those who reside in LTC homes.¹ These deaths, according to Ontario's Long-Term-Care COVID-19 Commission², can be attributed to a number of factors including insufficient leadership capacity and lack of leadership presence in the homes, increased vulnerability and frailty of residents; more frail residents than they were 10-20 years ago, with 81% of residents having some type of cognitive impairment, as well as the struggle with sufficient and adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and staffing resources, both prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Human resource challenges were exacerbated by new Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) legislation, when, effective April 22, 2020, an employee of a long-term care could only work for one long term care, healthcare provider or retirement home. Further, LTC homes in

¹ <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/data/long-term-care-homes>

² http://www.ltccommission-commissionsld.ca/ir/pdf/20201023_First_Interim_Letter_English.pdf

communities with increased community spread, and lack of strong Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) measures, were further challenged to control the virus given the congregate living environment of LTCs; some facilities had 3 or 4 resident beds per room, resulting in increased transmission and spread.

Reports and Recommendations

Long-Term Care Commission

The Ontario Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission began its work in the summer of 2020 to “investigate how and why COVID-19 spread in long-term care homes, what was done to prevent the spread, and the impact of key elements of the existing system on the spread”.³ Since that time, the Commission released two interim recommendations, October 23, 2020, and December 4, 2020, with a final report to be submitted to the Minister of Long-Term Care on April 30, 2021. The Honourable Justice Frank Marrocco, who also participated in the Walkerton Inquiry, is leading this commission.

Association of Municipalities of Ontario

To support providing the Commission with perspectives from municipally operated LTC homes, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) created a Health Task Force that consisted of elected officials, municipal staff working in LTC, Public Health and other municipal services. Interim recommendations were sent to the Commission in October 2020, with a final submission in January 2021⁴, outlining 49 recommendations for the Commission to consider in its report to the Ontario government, to help address successive COVID-19 waves and help prevent similar occurrences of an infectious disease outbreak in the future.

Auditor General

The Auditor General, Bonnie Lysyk, also released a report April 2021, entitled “COVID-19 Preparedness and Management: Special Report on Pandemic Readiness and Response in Long-Term Care”. The report makes 16 recommendations focused on how long-term care homes and the Ontario government can better respond to the issues emphasized during the pandemic⁵.

³ <http://www.ltccommission-commissionsld.ca/>

⁴ <https://www.amo.on.ca/sites/default/files/assets/DOCUMENTS/Reports/2021/ImprovingtheLongTermCareOutbreakResponseinOntarioAMOSubmissionLTCCOVID19Commission20210129.pdf>

⁵ https://auditor.on.ca/en/content/specialreports/specialreports/COVID-19_ch5readinessresponseLTC_en202104.pdf

Grey County Municipal Homes

Grey County Long-Term Care Communities, including Grey Gables (66 Residents), Lee Manor (150 Residents) and Rockwood Terrace (100 Residents) did not experience the devastating outcomes of other care communities; no resident deaths have been attributed to the COVID-19 virus. Only one COVID-19 outbreak was confirmed in these LTC homes. The outbreak involved one staff member and only impacted one unit. This outbreak was contained and managed effectively by LTC staff, in partnership with local public health.

Reflecting on the LTC commission's interim reports, there were a number of supporting factors that were in place prior to the pandemic which protected our residents, families, and staff, as well as a number of other strategies implemented throughout the pandemic to mitigate potential negative outcomes.

Leadership

Leadership was present and in the homes each day to provide direction and support. Leadership teams at each location divided themselves into two groups to ensure a rotational seven days a week support. This support continues and is currently based on a leadership team member providing weekend on-call support.

Personal Protective Equipment

Grey County homes initiated universal masking March 13, 2020, before mandated with secured PPE supplies. The homes also initiated universal eye protection to provide additional protection for staff and residents.

Staffing Resources

Staffing challenges were mitigated by a variety of strategies, including training and redeploying staff from all Grey County Departments in the first wave, the introduction of two new classifications-Care Support Aids (CSA) and Emergency Support Workers (ESW). Staff shortage contingency plans were established and regularly reviewed for each care community.

Adjusting some staff schedules and offering 12-hour shifts.

Revision of the Human Resources Employee Reporting Illness policy, to support staff to isolate safely.

Structure of Facilities

Each of the municipally operated homes in Grey County have no more than two residents per room. Each care community has unique layouts that required adaptations to support physical distancing measures. Specifically, dining areas, isolation rooms, and visiting stations. These modifications have assisted with reducing risk of any virus transmission.

Infection Prevention and Control

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) assessments were completed early on by all sites; supported by public health and our hospital partners and acted on any suggestions for improvement.

IPAC assessments continue to be reviewed each month by staff.

Dedicated staffing for IPAC including an IPAC lead identified for each home.

All leadership and front-line staff completed six Public Health Ontario IPAC online training modules to increase IPAC awareness and education.

Prepared and regularly reviewed cohorting plans, including consultation with Public Health Ontario to ensure appropriate isolation space, in the event that it was required.

Additional funding provided to support Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) measures has afforded the ability to increase surveillance and early detection measures (PCR and Rapid Testing), enhance IPAC awareness, purchase of equipment and resources to ensure resident and staff safety.

Communication

Communication and updates were provided by the Director of Long Term Care through weekly meetings with LTC homes and community partners.

Establishment of the Colour it Connect program in partnership with the IT department to use technology to support connection of residents with their loved ones. Grey County Communications assisted the Director of Long Term Care with hosting Virtual Town Halls, MailChimp and Newsletters distribution to keep families and key stakeholders informed.

Designated Care Partner Program

Recognizing the impact of Covid-19 prevention strategies on social and emotional wellbeing of residents a significant and robust Designated Care Partner (DCP) Program was developed. This program safely supports essential caregivers at the bedside. The

program was approved by Grey Bruce Public Health Unit. It was also presented at the LTC Delegation to Minister Fullerton at 2020 AMO conference. This program is now recognized nationally by Healthcare Excellence Canada and has been shared broadly. The importance of Caregivers presence has been highlighted throughout the pandemic and we are currently part of a research project to assess and evaluate this role.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The care communities currently have a 93% percentage of vaccinated residents, 74% staff, and 73% DCPs. Vaccinations are ongoing as new residents, Designated Care Partners (DCP), and new staff come onboard.

Partnerships

Organizational, local, regional, provincial, and national partnerships, networks and initiatives have been established and strengthened throughout the pandemic. These partnerships and working groups continue to be integral to maintaining positive outcomes.

Summary

We appreciate the support that the Long Term Care Committee of Management has provided throughout the pandemic. The benefits of municipally operated homes afford many protective factors for our residents, families, and staff. Reviewing the current reports and recommendations, along with highlighting the current state and strengths of the LTC care communities, there are a number of AMO recommendations that would further enhance the outcomes for our residents, and for our ability to Colour it into Tomorrow. The final report of the Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission is to be submitted to the Minister of Long Term Care on April 30, 2021. Staff will bring forward an additional report in June regarding the recommendations of that report.

Appendices and Attachments

[AMO's Response to the Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission 2021-01-29](#)

[Office of the Auditor General of Ontario - COVID-19 Preparedness and Management](#)