



March 17, 2020

Hon. Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
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Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1  
[premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

Hon. Christine Elliott  
Deputy Premier & Minister of Health  
Ministry of Health  
5th Floor  
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Dear Premier Ford and Minister Elliott:

**Re: Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic**

In light of the rapidly escalating situation both globally and in our country, we know that the health and safety of all people and health-care workers in Ontario is uppermost on your minds. We applaud your efforts to help flatten the curve and protect Ontarians by making the very tough decision to declare a state of emergency in Ontario.

We also commend your strong commitment to fully support the health-care sector by investing an initial \$300 million to increase capacity at hospitals and long-term care and seniors homes, while providing additional funding for more testing and screening. We were pleased to see this investment include \$50 million to protect point-of-care workers by increasing the supply of personal protective equipment and other critical supplies and equipment to protect them. With dedicated funds now in place, we ask that you act immediately to deploy those resources to ensure that point-of-care nurses and other health professionals have access to the protective equipment they need to safely deliver care throughout this crisis. Where clinical equipment decisions must be made in uncertain circumstances, we urge you to mandate employers to err on the side of over-protection and the use of precautions against airborne hazards.

Nurses are willing to support further efforts as demand continues to grow, whether it's those who are retired, non-practising, or can assist in virtual support outside their current roles. We ask that you move swiftly to

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backfill the 1,000 additional nurses — including NPs, RNs and RPNs — as well as deploy more personal support workers at hospitals and in long-term care and home settings to manage the influx of cases. This will improve our health human resource capacity to manage the increasing demands for patient care.

Nurses have made it clear that they will not abandon people or communities needing care, regardless of the dangers to themselves. But they want to make informed choices about their own risk of exposure based on consistent, clear information, grounded in the best available evidence, and knowing that every possible safeguard will be put in place to protect them. If nurses become sick while delivering care, then they will not be where we need them — and we all know well that the consequences for patients and communities will be dire.

We thank your government for your leadership and the swift actions you have taken to date to protect the public and we urge you to continue to implement policies and investments needed for the sustained support of nurses and all point-of-care workers. Our organizations look forward to continuing to work with you in these difficult times and we will be pleased to see the resources needed to protect nurses and all team members immediately deployed. If we can do anything to help your teams, you need only ask.

Sincerely,



Claire Betker, RN, MN, PhD, CCHN(C)  
President  
Canadian Nurses Association



Dawn Tymianski, MN, MA, PhD, CNN (C)  
Chief Executive Officer  
Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario



Dianne Martin  
Chief Executive Officer  
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cc: Dr. Michelle Acorn, Chief Nursing Officer  
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