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For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

181 COVID-19 outbreaks in health care settings leaving 89 residents dead & more than 1,800 staff & patients infected in 6-wks, numbers way up across the board, warns Ontario Health Coalition

Toronto- The spread of COVID-19 in long-term care, retirement homes and hospitals is growing at an alarming rate. By every measure-- case numbers, number and size of outbreaks and death numbers which follow the former a few weeks later -- COVID-19 is spreading much more rapidly. Tracking from the period of September 18 to October 28, the Ontario Health Coalition released its most recent outbreaks report for health and congregate care settings. It is available here: <https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/index.php/report-tracking-of-covid-19-outbreaks-in-health-care-settings-data-updated-to-october-28/>

The OHC reported 181 currently active outbreaks in health care settings:

- 97 active outbreaks in Ontario long-term care homes, which is more than double the number of active long-term care home outbreaks we found on September 18 (35 active outbreaks).
- 32 active outbreaks in hospitals
- 64 active outbreaks in retirement homes.

As of October 28, there were 33 currently active outbreaks in health care settings that we classified as “large” (10 cases or greater):

- 15 long-term care outbreaks
- 10 retirement home outbreaks
- 5 hospital outbreaks
- 3 outbreaks in other health and congregate care settings.

Since the beginning of the pandemic we have found that the total number of people infected by COVID-19 in health and congregate care settings including staff and patients/residents is 13,813 as of October 28, having increased by 1,804 people or 13.1 percent in six weeks. This is more than three times the rate of increase the previous four weeks (mid-August to mid-September) when the increase was 3.8 percent.

The rate of increase among patients/residents that have been infected by COVID-19 in health and congregate care settings has also grown. By October 28 we have tracked a cumulative total of 8,149 patients/residents, an increase of 959 patients/residents in six weeks (since September 18) or 11.8 percent. This growth rate is more than four and a half times as what we had calculated between August 25 and September 18 (2.5 percent).

By October 28 we have tracked a cumulative total of 5,631 staff members infected by COVID-19 in health and congregate care settings, or an increase of 832 staff in six weeks (14.8 percent). This is more than twice the rate that we calculated between August 25 and September 18 (6.0 percent).

The rate of increase for deaths of patients, residents, and staff in health and congregate care settings has more than doubled. The Ontario Health Coalition is deeply sorry to report that as of October 28, we found a cumulative total of 2,296 patients and residents deceased, up from 2,208 deceased as at September 18. The deaths among staff have not

increased in this period. That increase amounts to a heartbreaking 88 residents and patients over six weeks or an increase of 3.8 percent. This greater than what we calculated between August 25 and September 18 (1.5 percent). Deaths tend to follow infections by several weeks.

The Coalition reported remains deeply disappointed with the Ford government's failure to do anything substantive to address the staffing emergency in long-term care homes, to make them more resilient when the virus hits. They report hearing increasing numbers of stories from families of residents who are severely malnourished and dying of dehydration and lack of care. Families are once again shut out and residents are isolated in homes where staff, already scarce, are getting sick in alarming numbers. Residents are still being left with COVID-19 and woefully inadequate care, without hospitalization to get them care, even be it oxygen and comfort measures. It seems the whole focus of the pandemic response is to stop hospital ICUs from collapsing, but systematic, rigorous intervention to get cohorting and infection control measures happening at 1 or 2 cases, measures to get care levels up, respect for informed consent and provision of humane end-of-life care --even just basic care for LTC residents --across the board are not happening.