

MEDIA STATEMENT

Every Day Counts to Protect Health Care Workers and All Ontarians

December 21, 2020, TORONTO, ON – “Updated modelling released today confirms that strong and decisive public health measures are urgently needed to protect the health and safety of the people of Ontario and mitigate against the increasing risk that hospitals will face overwhelming pressures in January.

While hospitals sincerely appreciate today’s announcement from the Government of Ontario and are deeply respectful of the sacrifices a provincewide shutdown will entail, we are surprised and disappointed that it will be another five days before these measures come into effect. People across the province need clear public health communication, and the December 26th implementation date sends a confusing message about what they should and shouldn’t do at this crucial moment. We are already hearing from hospital and health system leaders who are shocked that the restrictions will not come into effect until after Christmas.

We are pleased to see supports for small businesses affected by the new measures included in today’s announcement. For the shutdown to be successful in reducing community transmission, programs such as paid sick leave and isolation accommodation for essential workers at businesses that will remain open should also be included and enhanced.

In the battle against COVID-19, every day makes a difference that can be tallied in lives lost, days spent in intensive care, and postponed surgeries and procedures. The toll of the past ten months on the mental health and well-being of exhausted health care professionals and workers on the frontlines and throughout the health care system cannot be underestimated. Unlike other Ontarians, many in the health sector have no choice but to work through the holidays under increasingly difficult conditions.

Please listen to the hospitals of Ontario. Please do everything you can to protect your loved ones, your communities, and health care workers by limiting your contacts to those within your household – especially over the Christmas holidays. The consequences of the decisions each of us makes today will be felt in Ontario’s hospitals in the weeks to come.”

- Anthony Dale, President and CEO, Ontario Hospital Association

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