

March 2021

A Message to our Community Partners

With solutions like rapid testing in our COVID-fighting toolkit, and vaccines delivering on their promise – with fewer cases and outbreaks – peopleCare is optimistic that Ontario’s senior living homes are on to a more positive chapter.

Vaccinations a partnership success story

Thanks to the support of community partners such as local public health units, hospitals, physicians and paramedics, the last six weeks have been an immunization success story in our Homes. We were fortunate to experience some exciting moments, including first residents in Waterloo region vaccinated at a peopleCare home ([Beautiful Bride Makes History, Receiving Vaccine](#)) and a resident of peopleCare Tavistock’s “best present ever,” ([Senior celebrates 95th birthday with Second COVID Vaccine Dose](#)). All peopleCare residents who were able and chose to get their shots are now fully vaccinated. Staff vaccination is ongoing, with our teams rolling up their sleeves in a big way – 80-90% uptake across our Homes. We’re also actively supporting public health in planning and rollout of clinics for family caregivers. While precautions like screening and masking are still incredibly valuable, we look forward to everyone in our communities benefiting from this added layer of protection.

Bringing innovative rapid testing to LTC

After advocating and informing government plans, peopleCare was one of the first LTC operators in Ontario to pilot rapid antigen tests for staff ([Kitchener Care Home Piloting COVID Test That Has Results in 15 Minutes](#)). Rapid tests have since proven valuable as a screening tool, and our Homes will be conducting thousands of rapid tests for staff as they come in to work, and for families and visitors as part of screening at the front door. Given the extra clinical resources required, we appreciate being able to draw on our valued partnerships to provide this new measure of support in our communities.

More Caring Hearts and Helping Hands in our Homes

We can’t say enough about the resiliency and dedication of staff these past months. Most recently we celebrated and acknowledged their efforts through our [Courage Values Awards](#). We are also thrilled about the government’s continued investments to address staffing shortages and get more caring hearts and helping hands into senior living homes – including the recent \$115M tuition support for 8,200 personal support worker (PSW) students. peopleCare has applied to every initiative, maximizing these new programs that aim to recruit, train and retain nurses, PSWs and resident support aides (RSAs – a new type of care worker). Thanks to these programs, along with our ongoing recruitment and retention strategies, including partnerships with colleges and universities, in 2020 we hired more than 125 new PSWs and RSAs to work in our Homes and make a big difference in the lives of our residents.

Building LTC Homes of the future

Staffing strategies will be so important as we continue to build LTC capacity with not one but three projects on the go. This spring, we look forward to the start of [Construction of new 128-bed Meaford LTC Home](#) and opening the home in 2022. Redevelopment of our AR Goudie LTC home in Kitchener begins this summer, wrapping up in 2022, followed by redevelopment of our Tavistock LTC Home, to open in 2023 ([A new beginning for the peopleCare home where it all began](#)). Upon receiving the required development agreements from the Ministry, we will immediately have shovels in the ground for our projects and continue to deliver new LTC beds, care and supports for seniors in our communities.

Huge thanks to our colleagues and partners across the sector and the health system who make it possible for peopleCare to deliver on our care commitments.