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For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

COVID-19 Outbreaks Have Grown Exponentially In Health Care Settings: Health Coalition tracking report finds 3,783 people infected and 435 patients/residents/staff deceased

Toronto – Today, the Ontario Health Coalition released a 70-page report tracking 1,127 confirmed staff, 1,936 residents/ patients and 720 additional confirmed cases (for whom public health authorities did not specify whether they are health care staff or patients) for a total of 3,783 people who have been infected with COVID-19 in health care facilities. The full report can be found [here](#). The report begins with a heartfelt message of shared grief, recognizing the terrible human toll the spread of the virus is taking on all the families, patients, residents and staff. The Coalition represents more than 500,000 Ontarians and more than 400 organizations who are concerned citizens, patient advocates, seniors, unions, family councils, residents, patients, doctors, nurses and health professions. Its mandate is to protect and improve public health care for all under the principles of the Canada Health Act.

On March 19, as outbreaks in long-term care homes began to be made public across Ontario, the Ontario Health Coalition began tracking and publicizing the spread of COVID-19 in health care settings. The Coalition had to delay the release of today's update because the task has become massive. Combing through daily status summaries, epidemiologic reports and outbreak reports from local Public Health Units, searching facilities and finding media reports that contain credible source information, the Coalition has compiled a tracking list of 283 health care and congregate care facilities with outbreaks, each one with sources listed. The Coalition reports that the 3,783 confirmed cases in health care settings that represent almost a third (30.9 percent) of the total reported for Ontario up to the afternoon of April 21. They have compared their data against that of Public Health Ontario in the report. With great sorrow, the Coalition reported a total of 435 deaths among patients/residents and staff in health care outbreaks.

“The spread in health care and congregate care settings continues to widen at an alarming pace,” said Natalie Mehra, executive director. “The outbreaks in hospitals continue to increase in number but, according to publicly available information, they appear to be contained more quickly and effectively than those in long-term care, retirement homes and congregate care/living settings. Since our last tracking report on April 7, while the number of outbreaks has risen significantly, the number of patients/residents in health care settings and the number of health care workers infected have increased exponentially. Tragically, the number of deaths that we have been able to find from outbreaks in health care settings has increased almost five-fold since April 7.”

“We are tracking the outbreaks to ensure that there is public scrutiny and the clearest possible picture of the extent of the spread of COVID-19 in health care settings even as public health measures and access to PPE improve. Clearly, measures have been too slow and continue to be inadequate, particularly in long-term care and other congregate living and care settings,” she reported. “We can create a picture of the spread with the numbers, but the real human toll of these outbreaks is beyond words.”

The Coalition's report tracked a significantly higher number -- 2,687 confirmed cases -- in long-term care than were reported in the Public Health Ontario data; including 1,455 among residents, 597 among staff and 635 unspecified (not clear whether they are residents or staff). They found 245 confirmed cases in hospital outbreaks. They have tracked 562 confirmed cases in 69 retirement home outbreaks including 367 among residents and 131 among staff and 64 unspecified (not clear whether they are residents or staff). In addition, they found 211 other health care/residential care staff and 57 other patients/residents in an additional 21 outbreaks in other health care settings.