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For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

Most Recent Tracking Report Shows that Ministry of Long-Term Care & Public Health Ontario Have Discontinued Public Reporting of Vital COVID-19 Data, Outbreaks in Health Settings Down but Death Rate Continues to Rise

Toronto – The Ontario Health Coalition released its most recent two-week report tracking the spread of COVID-19 among patients, residents and staff in health care settings today. The Coalition has been tracking every case it has been able to find from reliable sources (all sources footnoted) since March 12 and has regularly released a report analysing the trends and charting the changes every few weeks through the pandemic. The reports contain comparisons to Public Health Ontario’s data and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s data.

The Coalition reported that it was shocked to find that both Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Long-Term Care have stopped reporting on vital data, including the cumulative totals of residents/patients and staff infected in hospitals and long-term care homes and those totals for each long-term care home. There has been no explanation published for discontinuing the public release of this data. For researchers, families and the media, this change means that there is no longer a consistent data set that is publicly available to enable the public to compare data across time and see the trends. The Coalition is calling on the Ford government to publish the data back to early June when it was discontinued and to maintain public reporting of a consistent data set. We support adding in new data (such as data on outbreaks in private industry and agriculture where there is significant growth of COVID-19 and race-based data) but the removal of vital data about long-term care, hospitals and overall health care staff infection rates is unacceptable and should be reversed.

Here are the key findings from the most recent tracking contained in this report of cases in health care settings across Ontario up to the afternoon of June 17:

- Public Health Ontario has ceased to report the total number of health care workers infected as of June 10. (June 9 was the last time they included this information in the daily epidemiologic report.) They have also stopped reporting key information for health care outbreaks as follows: the total number of cases, the number of cases reported among staff and patients/residents, total number of deaths, deaths among residents/patients, and deaths reported among staff in retirement and hospital outbreaks; the numbers of confirmed cases by likely source of acquisition (exposure). They have not provided any explanation for discontinuing the reporting of these vital pieces of data.
- The Ministry of Long-Term Care data has also been changed. For the aggregate numbers, they are now only reporting the currently active cases each day in long-term care homes (see Chart 2) not the cumulative totals of residents and staff infected by COVID-19 in long-term care outbreaks to date. In their chart of outbreaks in long-term care homes they are now only reporting currently active cases and have discontinued reporting the totals to date. Again, there is no explanation for discontinuing this reporting.
- The total number of people infected by COVID-19 in health and congregate care settings including staff and patients/residents is 11,173 as of June 17, up from 10,837 as of June 2. This total increased by 336 people or

3.1 percent in two weeks, a significantly slower growth rate from the previous two-weeks when the increase was 21.1 percent.

- The total number outbreaks in health care and congregate care settings that the Ontario Health Coalition found as of June 17 is 664 (including 526 resolved) in 557 facilities including hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, Public Health Units, clinics and other congregate care settings. As of June 2, we found 615 outbreaks (including 386 resolved) in 535 facilities. The number of outbreaks that are active across health care settings that we have found is now 138 compared to 289 two weeks prior (June 2), thus, the first significant decrease (though we may not have been able to find all outbreaks as there is less public reporting now than there was in April through to early May).
 - There are, however, some long-term care homes that had declared outbreaks over and are now seeing new outbreaks, and there are some new outbreaks in long-term care homes that did not previously have outbreaks. There are a few new retirement home outbreaks also. There are new outbreaks in two private mental health and addiction treatment centres.
- The total number of patients/residents that have been infected by COVID-19 in health and congregate care settings has also increased. By June 2 we have tracked a total of 6,868 patients/residents who have contracted COVID-19 in health and congregate care settings. This is an increase of 157 patients/residents in two weeks (since June 2) or 2.3 percent. This is down from the 9.7 percent increase we calculated between May 19 and June 2.
- Despite the decrease in infection rates, tragically, the death toll among patients, residents and staff in health and congregate care settings has continued to increase dramatically although the rate of increase has slowed. The Ontario Health Coalition is deeply sorry to report that as of June 17, we found a total of 2,107 patients and residents deceased in outbreaks in health and congregate care settings, up from 1,919 deceased as at June 2. That increase amounts to a heartbreaking 198 residents and patients over two weeks, an increase of 9.8 percent. This is down from the 18.4 percent increase we calculated between May 19 and June 2.