

**Ministry of
Long-Term Care**

Office of the Minister

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December 23, 2020

The Honourable Frank N. Marrocco
Chair Commissioner
Angela Coke, Commissioner
Dr. Jack Kitts, Commissioner
Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission
24th Floor, 700 Bay Street
Toronto ON M5G 1Z6

Dear Chair Commissioner Marrocco and Commissioners Coke and Kitts:

Thank you for your letter of December 9 requesting an extension of the Commission's mandate.

In establishing the Commission under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, the Premier, the Minister of Health, and I highlighted the need for an expedited process to review the spread of COVID-19 in Ontario's long-term care homes. Our main goal was to establish an independent but agile review process to make timely recommendations that could both support the government's ongoing work managing COVID-19 and preventing the spread of disease in those homes, as well as informing the Government's priority focus on addressing long standing challenges in the sector. In this respect, I am pleased that the Commission has been able to deliver interim recommendations on October 23 and December 4.

The urgency of our situation has not changed. In fact, as Ontario deals with this next wave of COVID-19 throughout the province, the duration of which is unknown, the need for timely and focused advice is even more acute. The government has had to take aggressive and decisive action to deal with this situation, and we will continue to make COVID-19 and Ontario's long-term care system a central focus of our ongoing policy agenda. We have already made announcements about significant investments in long-term care, and your recommendations will inform our decisions to ensure those investments result in meaningful and concrete changes.

It is for these reasons that I must request that the Commissioners remain focused on the reporting deadline of April 30, 2021, as indicated in your Terms of Reference.

I appreciate the independence of the Commission in deciding how best to fulfill its Terms of Reference. At the same time, we would respectfully request that you consider prioritizing recommendations that would best support government decisions you believe are needed now. If you are of the view that there are matters that fall within your terms of reference that warrant further examination by government beyond April 30, 2021, I invite you to highlight those matters in your recommendations.

I want to assure you of the ongoing cooperation of the government as you complete your work. An organization as large as the Ontario Public Service can create a considerable volume of records and I note that government staff continue to be engaged full-time in responding to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. I have asked staff to continue to work with the Commission to ensure you receive the documents you require to fulfill your mandate in as timely a manner as possible.

We look forward to receiving the Commission's final report and recommendations by April 30, 2021. Keeping Ontarians safe—particularly our most vulnerable—continues to be the top priority of our government.

Sincerely,



Dr. Merrilee Fullerton
Minister of Long-Term Care