

Long Term Care Covid-19 Commission Mtg.

OPS Briefing on the Testing Strategy Presented by
Ministries, Ontario Health and Public Health Ontario
(OAHPP)
on Wednesday, November 25, 2020



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7	MEETING OF THE LONG-TERM CARE COVID-19 COMMISSION
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14	--- Held Virtually via Zoom, with all participants
15	attending remotely, on the 25th day of November,
16	2020, 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
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1 BEFORE:

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3 The Honourable Frank N. Marrocco, Lead Commissioner

4 Angela Coke, Commissioner

5 Dr. Jack Kitts, Commissioner

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7 PRESENTERS:

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9 Matthew Anderson, President and Chief Executive

10 Officer, Ontario Health

11 Dr. Dirk Huyer, Ontario's Chief Coroner and

12 Coordinator of Provincial Outbreak Response,

13 Ministry of the Solicitor General

14 Dr. Vanessa Allen, Chief of Microbiology and

15 Laboratory Science, Public Health Ontario

16 Fredrika Scarth, PhD, Director, Secretariat of

17 Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine,

18 Ministry of Health

19 Olha Dobush, Executive Lead for Long-Term Care

20 Stabilization, Ministry of Long-Term Care

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1 OBSERVERS :

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3 Catherine Brown, Interim Executive Lead, Health

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5 Miren Chauhan, Vice President of Corporate Services

6 at Health Shared Services, Ontario Health

7 Janice Dhanjal, Project Manager, Ontario Health

8 Alwin Kong, Chief Legal Officer, Public Health

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10 Louise Verity, Strategic Advisor, Office of the CEO

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12 Ministry of Long-Term Care

13 Tori O'Dwyer, Counsel, Ontario Health

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1 PARTICIPANTS:

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3 Alison Drummond, Assistant Deputy Minister,

4 Long-Term Care Commission Secretariat

5 John Callaghan, Counsel, Long-Term Care Commission

6 Secretariat

7 Derek Lett, Policy Director, Long-Term Care

8 Commission Secretariat

9 Jessica Franklin, Policy Lead of the Long-Term Care

10 Commission

11 Lynn Mahoney, Counsel, Long-Term Care Commission

12 Secretariat

13 Sunil S. Mathai, Counsel, Crown Law Office, Civil

14

15 ALSO PRESENT:

16

17 Olivia Arnaud, Stenographer/Transcriptionist

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1 -- Upon commencing at 2:30 p.m.

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3 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

4 Well, some of you are back. We recognize you from
5 having been here before. Sorry to keep doing this,
6 but we keep finding out more things that we need to
7 find out.

8 So we're very pleased that you -- you
9 understand the drill. So we'll listen, and we'll
10 ask questions as we go along, if that's okay.

11 The other thing that may have
12 changed -- there's two things that may have
13 changed. First of all, as you know, we issued an
14 interim report. We may issue a second one.

15 Secondly, we've learned a little bit as
16 we've gone on here, so you can move through basics
17 a little quicker than you might normally do, but
18 certainly, if you feel there's something
19 fundamental or basic that you need to tell us to
20 set up what you want to say, then go right ahead.
21 But we're moving along in terms of our own
22 knowledge.

23 And there's a transcript, as you know,
24 which we will post eventually on the website so
25 that people can follow along with what we're up to.

1 So, Mr. Anderson, I guess, if you're
2 leading, when you're ready, we're ready.

3 MATTHEW ANDERSON: Great. Well, thank
4 you very much. And thank you, Commissioners, for
5 inviting us back and for allowing us to come and
6 speak with you today.

7 Just to do a more formal introduction
8 of myself and my colleagues. So we came here
9 before. You recall me: I'm Matthew Anderson,
10 president and CEO of Ontario Health.

11 I would like to say, consistent with my
12 initial appearance before the Commission, I just
13 need to disclose that I do have a personal,
14 non-financial connection through my extended family
15 to Extendicare, an operator of long-term care homes
16 in Ontario. Should any questions arise as it
17 pertains specifically to Extendicare, my colleagues
18 will respond to those questions.

19 Joining me today is Dr. Vanessa Allen.
20 Dr. Allen is the Chief of Microbiology and
21 Laboratory Science at Public Health Ontario. She's
22 also the Medical Director of Ontario Health's
23 Provincial Diagnostic Network.

24 Also with us today is Dr. Dirk Huyer.
25 Dr. Huyer is Ontario's Chief Coroner, Coordinator

1 of the Provincial Outbreak Response, a role he took
2 on on August the 26th, 2020. He also played a role
3 in the area of testing, specifically targeted
4 testing campaigns during late spring and summer.

5 Also with us is Olha Dobush. Olha is
6 the Executive Lead for Long-Term Care Stabilization
7 for the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

8 And Fredrika Scarth: Fredrika is the
9 Director of Testing Strategy Coordination with the
10 Ministry of Health.

11 Today, as you know, we're going to be
12 talking about testing, and, you know, just
13 acknowledgement that the availability and access to
14 timely, high-quality COVID-19 testing has been an
15 important component of Ontario's pandemic response.

16 Testing in Ontario is supported by a
17 great number of organizations and people. We work
18 collaboratively in a true partnership to bring this
19 capacity to the province and is somewhat evident by
20 the number of people who have joined us today to
21 talk about testing.

22 Our presentation overall, from an
23 agenda perspective, I will cover initially the
24 testing continuum just to do a little bit of a lay
25 of the land on what we're talking about with

1 respect to testing.

2 We'll hand it over to Dr. Allen and
3 Fredrika, who'll do the bulk of the discussion
4 around the testing approach and strategy, and then
5 to Ms. Dobush and Dr. Huyer to talk specifically
6 about our testing in long-term care.

7 So with that, Commissioners, unless
8 there's anything else, we can just get right into
9 it, and if I can just get that -- whoever's
10 [inaudible] -- that's perfect, thank you, whoever
11 is doing our slides for us.

12 So this is our testing continuum slide,
13 and we thought we would start here.

14 One of the challenges that we've faced
15 over the last nine months is people just refer to
16 "testing," and in fact, there are quite a number of
17 elements to our testing. So if you'll indulge me,
18 I'll just very rapidly walk you through what's on
19 this chart.

20 I'll start at the top by saying that
21 the Ministry of Health is responsible for the
22 overall strategy for testing in the Province of
23 Ontario. And there's a little asterisk on that at
24 the bottom in the fine print that when we speak
25 specifically of long-term care homes, we do look to

1 the Ministry of Long-Term Care to set the guidance
2 for our long-term care testing strategy, but
3 overall, we looked at the Ministry of Health, who
4 sets the strategy.

5 I'm just going to walk you from left to
6 right across our little chart here. And when we
7 think about testing, there's really five components
8 to it, and then a sixth, which is the tracing.

9 And so on the far left, you'll see the
10 process starts with testing guidance, and so the
11 testing guidance is ultimately set through the
12 Ministry of Health but comes through our
13 Chief Medical Officer of Health, and at
14 Public Health Ontario, Public Health Ontario has
15 established a testing expert panel.

16 So that expert panel will provide
17 recommendations to the Chief Medical Officer of
18 Health. The Chief Medical Officer of Health will
19 then bring those forward to the Ministry of Health,
20 and ultimately, a decision will be made as to any
21 updates or changes to our testing guidance.

22 The changes to testing guidance we've
23 [made into with] (ph) this conversation is is it's
24 kind of a big deal. It has a lot of impacts when
25 we think about being able to do comparative

1 analysis, as a for instance, around different
2 periods of time in testing. So this is not
3 something -- when we do change testing guidance,
4 it's not done lightly. It is through this kind of
5 a consultative process before testing guidance
6 would change.

7 In terms of the lab itself, the lab
8 processing itself, you'll see in the white box,
9 towards the bottom there, it says "Ontario Health
10 Coordinates." So the white box is really what
11 we're referring to when we talk about the
12 Provincial Diagnostic Network in Ontario Health's
13 role in coordinating.

14 So there's different steps here.

15 The first one is specimen collection,
16 and it is as it sounds. This is where you would be
17 swabbed, one of our favourite terms. We talk about
18 swabbing quite a bit. It's really specimen
19 collection. And you can see in the bullet points
20 below, there's a great number of places where we
21 actually do specimen collection. In fact, there
22 would be several hundred places where specimens are
23 collected.

24 We typically talk about assessment
25 centres that are hospital-based, but they're not

1 exclusively hospital-based. Our pharmacies are now
2 doing specimen collection, Public Health is
3 involved in specimen collection, and long-term care
4 homes do specimen collection, and community
5 providers. So we do a lot of specimen collection
6 in communities where we ask community health
7 centres, as a for instance, to participate in
8 specimen collection.

9 Once the specimen is collected, it then
10 needs to be transported. And we just listed again
11 different folks who are involved, different
12 agencies that are involved in transportation. Some
13 of this, as our network matures up, we are being
14 more deliberate and more centrally organizing
15 transportation, but that's not always the case in,
16 you know, all instances, since some providers will
17 ship based off of their local courier pattern.

18 It then arrives at the lab, and this is
19 where our network started is the coordination of
20 these labs. And Dr. Allen will correct me if I've
21 got the number not quite right, but essentially, we
22 have a little over 20 what we call core labs.
23 These are labs that are either at Public Health
24 Ontario, in a hospital, or private labs. So this
25 is a public-private laboratory network, and so we

1 will have labs from hospitals, PHO, and also our
2 community labs as all part of this.

3 That's a little over 20. We have
4 another 20 that we call affiliate labs where they
5 do lower-volume tests for us but often in areas
6 that are hard to reach. So think of up in the
7 North, and again, Dr. Allen can expand on some of
8 that through her talk.

9 So, you know, a few hundred specimen
10 collection centres, through transportation, into
11 about 40 labs. We have the joy of also -- but
12 these labs are all run on different information
13 systems, and so we have to coordinate across
14 several different information systems, which makes
15 most of this network or big parts of this network
16 paper-based because we have to do data entry into
17 the different information systems.

18 That information -- once the lab test
19 has been processed, we produce a result. The
20 result, typical, would be posted on Our Lab
21 Information System¹, lovingly referred to as OLIS,
22 that has a web viewer so people can go and look at
23 their lab result. The results are also
24 communicated back to the ordering physician and, in
25 the case of positive cases, is also communicated to

1 our public health units.

2 We also have a number of agencies,
3 being the Ministry of Health, our public health
4 units, and Ontario Health who produce aggregate
5 reports off of the results that are posted into
6 OLIS. Once we have a result, if it's positive, it
7 kicks over into the Case Management System, which
8 is run by our public health units.

9 That is my whirlwind tour. I wanted to
10 just walk you through that so when we talk about
11 testing, and there may be times in the question and
12 answer where we want to delineate what we are
13 referring to because these different components --
14 one of the things that we've learned through all of
15 this is that all of these components have to be
16 brought online and expanded basically in unison in
17 order to maintain the integrity of the network.

18 If any one part gets too far ahead of
19 the other parts, we can see a degradation in
20 performance. And when Dr. Allen is presenting,
21 she'll point out the period of time at the end of
22 September where our specimen collection actually
23 ramped up much faster than our transportation and
24 laboratory capacity was in place for and we saw a
25 period of long turnarounds.

1 I will say that our turnaround time --
2 and my last comment and then I'm going to hand it
3 off to Dr. Allen -- is that what we endeavor to do
4 when we measure turnaround time is we measure from
5 the time -- so this entire process, everything
6 under the white box. So from the time the specimen
7 is collected to the time the result is posted in
8 OLIS.

9 And our goal is that at least
10 80 percent of the time, we're able to do that
11 entire process in under two days. It's an
12 ambitious goal, particularly given that we've built
13 all of this infrastructure. The pieces were all in
14 place prior to March of 2020, but what I've just
15 described in the coordination effort and putting it
16 all through into OLIS, this has all been created
17 over the last nine months, including the setting up
18 of the assessment centres. So it's many, many
19 moving parts.

20 If you're okay, Commissioners, I'll
21 pause there, and I'll hand it over to Dr. Allen,
22 who's going to take us through the strategies that
23 are behind it. I just wanted to go over the bare
24 bones of how the system operates.

25 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

1 Just before you do that -- Commissioner Coke?

2 COMMISSIONER ANGELA COKE: So just a
3 question, a planning question.

4 So did your pre-COVID sort of pandemic
5 plans include how you would quickly ramp-up your
6 lab capacity? What was in your original plans
7 before you even had to get to this stage?

8 MATTHEW ANDERSON: I believe that is
9 the first slide that Dr. Allen is going to speak
10 to.

11 COMMISSIONER ANGELA COKE: Okay.

12 MATTHEW ANDERSON: So if it's okay,
13 we'll let her put that slide up, and she can speak
14 directly to that question.

15 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
16 And my question was, the guidance, did that always
17 set out who could be tested? Like, who was
18 eligible for testing and who wasn't?

19 MATTHEW ANDERSON: That is correct.

20 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

21 All right.

22 MATTHEW ANDERSON: Okay. Dr. Allen,
23 over to you.

24 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Great. Thank you.

25 Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

1 And thank you for the chance to speak
2 with you today.

3 So to the question that was just
4 raised, I think a lot was -- some of the questions
5 are around what was the preparedness from a testing
6 perspective with respect to COVID.

7 So I'll just walk you through the early
8 days. There is an infrastructure; I don't describe
9 it here. There is an influenza pandemic plan for
10 testing that our approach actually was very
11 consistent with, but we have never seen the scale
12 of testing requirements that have been brought upon
13 by COVID.

14 So I don't think any of the existing
15 plans have projected this kind of capacity, but I
16 think there are some very interesting turning
17 points along the trajectory that might be helpful
18 to inform your report.

19 So with respect to the initial
20 chronology, PHO was established in the face of SARS
21 and has established a robust capacity to respond to
22 unknown or emerging infections. So we have a
23 pathogen preparedness unit that actually develops
24 protocols both for pathogens that have been
25 identified internationally but also for pathogens

1 of unknown etiology.

2 So on January 3rd when we're notified
3 of the seafood market in Wuhan, we had already
4 developed a testing protocol and publicized that on
5 the website for what we do for a sample from
6 someone with symptoms who came from Wuhan or China
7 for which we needed testing.

8 We did have a teleconference of
9 provincial partners, and on January the 10th, we
10 actually tested our first sample, and it was the
11 first sample that was tested in Canada. That very
12 weekend that we were testing the first sample, the
13 viral sequence of COVID was released, or SARS-CoV-2
14 was released. And we actually compared it to the
15 battery of tests that we were running our samples
16 against, and it was a match to one of the tests
17 that we were returning.

18 So specifically, we had developed a
19 test for MERS, which is in the same group of
20 coronaviruses, and it's a more generic test for
21 that group of viruses, and so we already had a test
22 ready to go.

23 But in the meantime, we had also
24 established -- or not established but confirmed the
25 relationship with NML, and, in fact, what had been

1 decided was that all samples tested until we had
2 much more experience with this pathogen would be
3 tested in duplicate both at PHO and at the National
4 Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg.

5 So this sample, the first sample was
6 negative, and it was confirmed as negative at the
7 National Microbiology Lab that weekend.

8 On January the 25th, we had our first
9 presumptive positive in Ontario and in Canada, and
10 that was identified first at PHO and then confirmed
11 two days later at the National Microbiology Lab
12 using these diagnostic strategies.

13 So I'll describe the testing volumes
14 over time, but there was actually very -- there was
15 a lot of work in preparing for this test, but there
16 weren't large, large volumes of test requests at
17 this time. And, in fact, on February the 26th when
18 we had tested no more than 600 samples in total or
19 no more than 650 samples in total, we had made the
20 formal recommendation that capacity beyond PHO for
21 testing should be afforded to ensure that we had
22 increased capacity should the demand surge.

23 We were seeing, for example, the
24 initial outbreak in South Korea at that time, and
25 so there was a lot of effort for further

1 preparedness for Ontario.

2 The other thing of note, and it speaks
3 to the earlier part, is PHO actually never rejected
4 a sample. So while there was testing criteria in
5 those early days, what we did is for any sample
6 that was submitted without clear articulation of
7 meeting the surveillance guidelines, a
8 microbiologist would actually phone the clinician
9 and go over what the pros and cons were of testing.

10 But ultimately, if the clinician
11 decided that the sample should be tested, it was
12 always tested, and no sample was ever rejected.

13 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Dr. Allen,
14 can I ask you a question?

15 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Of course.

16 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: So doing the
17 tests initially at PHO and getting confirmed by
18 NML, is that a quality control initiative to start?

19 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Yeah, it's a great
20 question. So they were doing pretty much the same
21 battery of tests, but the premise of that was given
22 that it was such a novel pathogen, it would be
23 better to test it at two high-quality labs, what we
24 do --

25 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Okay.

1 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: -- for the false
2 positive [inaudible].

3 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: And how many
4 labs is PHO? Is it one lab or a number of labs?

5 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: We have 11 lab
6 sites, but all of the testing at that time was at
7 our Toronto site because that's where the bulk of
8 both the instrumentation and the expertise lies.

9 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Okay. Thank
10 you.

11 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
12 You know, the pathogen is in China, then it's in
13 Korea. Was there a thought, then, that perhaps
14 doing them all at one lab or doing them all in
15 Toronto would be difficult, that the volumes would
16 go up?

17 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Absolutely. So,
18 you know, we actually formally submitted a
19 recommendation on February the 26th because we were
20 concerned that this would need to be -- that there
21 needed to be urgent consideration of using all of
22 the high-quality molecular lab capacity in the
23 province.

24 And, in fact, if you look at
25 South Korea, they had MERS in 2015, and they

1 already had a very distributed laboratory capacity
2 throughout their country, and so it was exactly to
3 model on that to distribute that capacity.

4 So yes, that was formally recognized in
5 the middle of February.

6 And just for context: So we had only
7 tested 629 samples the day that that recommendation
8 came. We're now testing 40,000 a day. So it's a
9 very small number of samples at which we raised
10 that flag, and it was more based on what we were
11 seeing internationally.

12 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
13 And was the guidance, what was it -- was who could
14 be tested, then, was that at a high level, or did
15 it require a person to be, like, seriously showing
16 the disease or something of that nature in order to
17 qualify for the test?

18 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Excellent question.
19 So at the early stages, there was a definition, and
20 it was established by the Chief Medical Officer of
21 Health, and it evolved over time.

22 So at the beginning, it was really
23 looking for people that came from that seafood
24 market, then it expanded to Wuhan City, then it
25 expanded to the province. And the symptom range

1 was pretty broad. So I don't think there was a lot
2 of debate. If someone had any respiratory
3 symptoms, they were recommended for testing as per
4 the guidelines.

5 So those were the Public Health
6 guidelines, but complementing that, you know, as a
7 public health laboratory, we're not only a public
8 health service, but we're also a clinical service.
9 And so what had been established was that if there
10 was any clinical suspicion that we would review
11 that -- and ultimately, it was the clinician's
12 decision -- but certainly, anyone that fell within
13 the CMOH's guidance would get tested, but many more
14 got tested beyond that.

15 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
16 So if there was a sample submitted, a clinician at
17 the lab would communicate with whoever --

18 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Exactly.

19 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
20 -- submitted the sample, and the clinician would
21 decide whether to test the sample or not?

22 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Right. That's
23 right. We would give the advice, but ultimately,
24 the decision was his.

25 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR): I

1 see. Okay.

2 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

4 All right. Thank you.

5 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Thank you.

6 So the other thing that isn't in this
7 slide, it's just to note that, in Ontario, the
8 laboratory system that was leveraged after
9 February 26th and ultimately makes up the
10 Provincial Diagnostic Network that Mr. Anderson
11 described really is three separate parts of the
12 laboratory system.

13 So there's Public Health Ontario
14 laboratory system. There's a hospital-based
15 laboratory -- not system, but network of labs
16 throughout hospitals and community labs.

17 And so it was really to merge these
18 more coherently as a true functioning system for
19 the provincial response.

20 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

21 Dr. Allen, before you go on: So initially, the
22 guidance focused on whether you had been in one of
23 the places where the disease was rampant or quite
24 obvious.

25 Did long-term care homes, since those

1 people aren't likely going anywhere or hadn't come
2 from -- were they excluded from testing?

3 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: It's an excellent
4 question. So in February, certainly the guidance
5 was more around travel-related cases, from a
6 provincial guidance perspective.

7 So as a clinician providing testing at
8 the Public Health Ontario Lab, I don't recall of an
9 example of a sample from long-term care for which
10 we were requested for testing. It wasn't a big
11 focus, certainly, in February with respect to the
12 number of samples that were being requested.

13 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
14 Was that because it wasn't foreseeable in February
15 that this disease would cause lots of trouble in a
16 long-term care facility? Did that become apparent
17 after, or why was that?

18 MATTHEW ANDERSON: Do you want me --

19 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Yeah, go ahead.

20 MATTHEW ANDERSON: Do you want me to
21 just add in there, Dr. Allen?

22 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Yeah.

23 MATTHEW ANDERSON: So just one quick
24 thought on that is that in the time frame of late
25 February into about early March -- and we have to

1 look at the exact dates -- we still had not
2 confirmed community spread. So the guidance was
3 still very much focused on travel or cases that
4 were linked to travel. It had not become a more
5 broad guidance around community spread.

6 And I believe, and correct me if I've
7 got it wrong, Dr. Allen, that it's when we clicked
8 over to the recognition of community spread that
9 the guidance then broadened --

10 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: That's right.

11 MATTHEW ANDERSON: -- but again, we can
12 check all those dates for you, Commissioner.

13 FREDRIKA SCARTH: And [inaudible] --

14 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
15 It wasn't the dates. I was just trying to -- I'm
16 sorry. Go ahead.

17 FREDRIKA SCARTH: I'm sorry. I was
18 just saying, we do have some of that information a
19 bit later in the presentation.

20 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
21 Yeah, that's fine. I really was just trying to
22 understand it. If it was travel-related, I was
23 just having some difficulty how it could cover
24 someone who wasn't travelling and couldn't travel,
25 and I think I sort of...

1 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Right.

2 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR): I
3 think I understand.

4 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: It wasn't a large
5 focus at that point in terms of the
6 high-probability cases. Okay.

7 So if I could go to the next slide,
8 please?

9 So I'll be speaking to this, but this
10 is work that Ontario Health really led.

11 So concurrently, there was an
12 incredible build of sites for specimen collection,
13 and so in March 2020, Ontario Health partnered with
14 hospitals to establish the COVID assessment
15 centres, and there was incredible mobilization
16 [indecipherable] occur.

17 And currently, there are over 160
18 testing locations that now extend even beyond these
19 assessment centres to community testing sites,
20 pharmacies, and mobile capacity.

21 Next slide, please.

22 So with respect to the chronology of
23 the testing volumes: So in January -- so again, we
24 started on January 3rd to develop a structure and
25 capacity for testing for this particular organism,

1 but the submissions in January for COVID testing
2 were still relatively low, so 103.

3 Again, to your point, they were focused
4 largely on individuals who had travelled from
5 countries where there were known COVID cases, and
6 then it started to increase over the course of
7 February. And while this doesn't show it, by a
8 weekly basis, it was really an incremental rise.

9 So throughout February, we tested over
10 1,800 samples; again, very low relative to the
11 testing volumes that we're performing today, and it
12 was on February 26th when it was only, in fact, a
13 small subset of those samples that we asked for
14 some assist- -- or made the recommendation that
15 testing should be distributed beyond PHO.

16 And in March, so prior to the
17 establishment of the Provincial Diagnostic Network,
18 there was an informal collaboration across labs
19 with the support of the Office of the Chief Medical
20 Officer of Health. And so some hospital labs did
21 start testing as early as March the 10th. And so
22 throughout the month of March, we had tested almost
23 50,000 samples, two-thirds of that being still at
24 Public Health Ontario but a third of them at
25 hospital labs.

1 But what did happen at the end of March
2 was that the guidance for testing had become much
3 broader, and there was an acknowledgement or a
4 recognition that there was community transmission,
5 and the volumes exceeded the capacity that we had
6 within this informal relationship between hospital
7 labs and Public Health Ontario.

8 And it was on March the 29th that
9 Ontario Health assisted with the establishment of a
10 formal Provincial Diagnostic Network.

11 And since then, there has been
12 incredible both formalization and efforts to
13 increase both the capacity but also to reduce the
14 turnaround time and the integration of all of the
15 components of the testing framework that was
16 described by Mr. Anderson earlier.

17 This week, our current daily average is
18 over 40,000 tests per day, and there is further
19 building for both capacity and active efforts to
20 reduce the turnaround time for the samples that are
21 received.

22 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
23 Doctor, I just want to understand the timing.
24 That's where my question's directed.

25 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Okay.

1 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
2 So January 3rd, Public Health Ontario has already
3 concluded that it has to pay attention to this
4 virus. If nothing else, it could be transmitted
5 here by someone travelling from Wuhan to here, and
6 then it would be loose in the Canadian countryside.

7 When do you start to think about --
8 from a testing perspective, when does this first
9 come up on the radar screen? Because by
10 January 3rd, a decision is made. I'm just trying
11 to understand the timing.

12 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: If I may, I would
13 sort of separate it into two components.

14 The first one is we are continuously
15 developing diagnostic algorithms for emerging
16 pathogens in the world. So Ebola, we have a test
17 for when it emerged there. We have a test for
18 Zika. We have tests for various different kinds of
19 enterovirus that cause -- so this is part of our
20 routine business and really a product of some of
21 our mandated responsibilities post-SARS.

22 So that has been afforded both by the
23 investments that have been made there but also some
24 of the technological advances. So you can actually
25 now do testing without knowing what the pathogen

1 is, which wasn't possible during SARS.

2 So that doesn't answer your question,
3 but, like, the decision in January to develop that
4 test raises a flag, but at that time, it was not
5 clear that it was going to be at this scale.

6 But I do think that we were, you know,
7 very aware, and as we always are for any of these
8 pathogens, very aware that there is always the
9 potential that it becomes more important in Ontario
10 and what the potential consequences of that are and
11 also to not have robust capacity in Ontario, what
12 that could mean.

13 So the parallel example is Ebola.
14 We're not going to have Ebola transmission in
15 Ontario, but we know that it's really important to
16 have testing capacity so we can deliver appropriate
17 results quickly to our citizens.

18 So the real flag for us was really that
19 third week of February, and it was primarily based
20 on what we were seeing internationally. There was
21 not yet the identification of community spread in
22 Ontario, but it was recognized certainly by PHO and
23 other laboratories within the system that, to work
24 together, we would be much better prepared.

25 And when we did make that

1 recommendation to the Chief Medical Officer of
2 Health, the day after, we had a meeting and we
3 arranged it, and there was funding arranged to get
4 some of those initial supplies up and ready, and
5 that was where Mount Sinai, SharedLabs, SickKids
6 all implemented testing the week of March the 10th.

7 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

8 Okay.

9 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: If I could go to
10 the next slide, please?

11 So as described both by Mr. Anderson
12 and in some of the earlier slides that I spoke to,
13 one of the key components to the success of a
14 testing service for COVID is really the turnaround
15 time.

16 There are many components to ensuring
17 that turnaround time is minimized as much as
18 possible, and it really goes along the continuum:
19 So making sure that the specimens are collected and
20 shipped rapidly, that the data components to it are
21 smooth and rapid but the testing itself is as
22 expedited as possible, and ultimately, the speed of
23 getting results to both the public health units and
24 to the providers that serve the clients that they
25 saw.

1 And so overall, the goal, the target
2 has been 80 percent of tests completed within
3 two days, as Mr. Anderson described, and 60 percent
4 of tests completed by one day. You know, we have
5 been closer to meeting the 80 percent within two
6 days, and the two times where this was most
7 seriously threatened was when demand for tests
8 well-exceeded the capacity that we had within the
9 system.

10 And the two times that that occurred
11 was late March when Ontario Health formalized the
12 Provincial Diagnostic Network, and then in late
13 September, which has since been resolved, but
14 again, the demand for tests exceeded the capacity
15 within the system.

16 There are currently, and I'll speak to
17 it later, very, very active efforts to reduce
18 turnaround time for tests, particularly in the
19 setting of long-term care.

20 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR): I
21 was just going to say that, Doctor, because one of
22 the things we have heard when we were talking to
23 residents, the families of the people who died,
24 there was, in the context of those discussions, a
25 sense that it was taking, like, seven days or

1 longer for results to come back.

2 And so our submission is, well, that's
3 kind of futile; it's taking so long to get the
4 sample results back. All the harm is done,
5 et cetera. So was there that kind of -- from your
6 perspective, was there that kind of problem with
7 long-term care sampling?

8 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: So certainly, we've
9 had reports and identified that some samples have
10 taken a considerable amount of time. There has
11 always been a prioritization framework for samples
12 in outbreaks in long-term care, but we know a lot
13 more work has to happen to make that better.

14 So, for example, sometimes samples
15 would sit in a fridge for a day or two or they
16 wouldn't come labelled or the system didn't deliver
17 them in the time.

18 So just overall, this is basically a
19 system that's been built in nine months -- really,
20 the system itself has been since March, so it's
21 really within the last six-plus months and really
22 figuring out to improve the turnaround times there.

23 So I would say there is -- I would
24 agree there is important need to reduce the
25 turnaround time for samples relating to long-term

1 care, and I think that's a commitment that we all
2 share.

3 I would say, to date, the experience
4 has been variable, but our average turnaround time
5 has been two days. So it's not that they're all at
6 seven days, but I recognize the efforts that are
7 underway and necessary to further reduce that.

8 MATTHEW ANDERSON: If I may,
9 Commissioner, just add a comment in support of
10 Dr. Allen's: So first is that what we're showing
11 you is the provincial average, recognizing it's a
12 very, very big province with all kinds of
13 variations, and we do monitor underneath here. We
14 would monitor by region and where we can by lab, by
15 ordering facility, et cetera. So there's different
16 ways to cut the data, but we just, for the sake of
17 averages, shared this particular one.

18 I would say -- Dr. Allen also has
19 spoken to it, and why I wanted to show that slide
20 at the beginning on that test continuum -- because
21 I too have heard and am very concerned about
22 reports of long turnaround time, seven days and
23 ten days and that sort of thing.

24 What we have to do when we hear those
25 reports and what we do do is, first off, where

1 there is a documented incident of that is to try to
2 unpack where did this break down.

3 And if you recall the slide that I
4 showed earlier, in the lab processing component of
5 the four steps, with the exception of that time
6 period in September where we did have it sort of
7 overloaded, that's our most reliable component.

8 The variation in the lab, the lab
9 processing step of those four steps is between 12
10 to 18 hours, and that's very consistent and rarely
11 changes except for that one period for about two
12 weeks in September where that became an unreliable
13 component from a turnaround perspective.

14 So what that means for us is that we
15 have to then work through the other parts of that
16 chain. Is it at the specimen collection, and as
17 Dr. Allen suggested, is it transportation? And we
18 have heard of areas where there isn't a
19 standardized transportation network. So they might
20 call a courier; the courier is arriving the next
21 day; they're delivering the specimen the following
22 day. So you've now lost two or three days before
23 the specimen has even arrived at the lab.

24 The other element is the reporting
25 back. There is some standardization with the

1 reporting back. If people don't have a cellphone,
2 we will often fax or in some instances mail back
3 the results, and so anywhere in there could be that
4 issue.

5 So for us, what we're doing -- and we,
6 I think, have a slide on that later if we get
7 there -- is just systemically going through for
8 each of the specimen collection areas, how do we
9 standardize that process and make sure that through
10 transportation to the lab and the reporting, it can
11 be consistent all the way along through that while
12 processing a little over a quarter of a million
13 tests a week. And so we're trying to do both -- a
14 little bit of trying to engineer that.

15 One of the things that we are looking
16 at is is there a way -- again, most of this,
17 unfortunately, until it gets to the lab, is
18 paper-based. We are rolling out an electronic
19 [inaudible] system at the front end, which makes
20 the diagnostics a whole lot easier.

21 Going back -- so that's one of the
22 things that we're working on. The only other
23 comment that I would make, going back to
24 Dr. Allen's point, is that there is a
25 prioritization process for long-term care outbreak

1 specimens; however, that has to be followed.

2 And so we have to make sure -- and
3 because it's paper-based, we have to make sure that
4 everybody who is doing an outbreak study knows the
5 process, follows the process; otherwise, those
6 specimens will show up in the lab, and the lab
7 won't know to prioritize those specimens. It will
8 just go into the cue with any other specimen that
9 has come along.

10 So all of these things we're working on
11 in real time to try to improve that, and likewise,
12 just lastly on long-term care, if there is a
13 specimen collected in a long-term care home that's
14 not part of an outbreak process, we also want to
15 standardize that because, again, that could go into
16 the -- from a lab perspective, we would never know
17 that that specimen is being collected until it
18 arrives at our door.

19 And so we're trying to make sure that
20 if a specimen gets collected, it is shipped upon
21 collection, it has all the information on it that
22 we need, and it's certainly a little bit of a
23 challenge as we create this [inaudible].

24 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
25 Thank you.

1 Well, I'm fine. Go ahead, Doctor.

2 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Okay. Thank you.

3 So what I'd like to go through is just
4 the main components of the laboratory testing
5 services. So we've discussed these a little bit
6 already but just in a little bit more depth.

7 So what is the approach to who should
8 be tested, how and where the sample is collected,
9 how the sample is analyzed, how results get to
10 those who need it, and ultimately, how individuals
11 and clinicians and Public Health can get support
12 for interpretation of test results.

13 All of these five components have
14 evolved over the course of the pandemic, through
15 both a lot of learnings but also optimizing it for
16 the delivery of the testing component of the
17 response.

18 Next slide, please.

19 So this was described earlier. So
20 ultimately, it is the Ministry of Health and the
21 Chief Medical Officer of Health who determines the
22 testing guidance. It is informed by a testing
23 strategy expert panel that was established in early
24 April at the request of the Health Command, now
25 Coordination Table.

1 The testing strategy expert panel is
2 just one source of many inputs, but it includes
3 experts really across the spectrum of expertise, so
4 the experts have expertise in Public Health and
5 microbiology, ethics, infection prevention and
6 control, laboratory science, epidemiology and
7 modelling and analytics.

8 And the initial mandate was really to
9 provide evidence-based pragmatic recommendations
10 for consideration by the Ministry of Health, and
11 since July, the efforts have been ongoing review of
12 routine testing recommendations, workplace testing,
13 resource prioritization because, at times, the
14 demand, as described earlier, exceeds the overall
15 capacity, and any guidance for which we can help
16 with respect to targeted testing.

17 It is housed at PHO, and then it's
18 submitted to the Office of the Chief Medical
19 Officer of Health, the recommendations that emerged
20 on this.

21 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
22 So does the Chief Medical Officer of Health make
23 the decision?

24 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: We make these
25 recommendations to the Chief Medical Officer of

1 Health, and the guidance document comes from the
2 Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Ministry of
3 Health.

4 I can pass it to Fredrika, if you'd
5 like to add more.

6 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Sure.

7 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
8 But is it guidance, or is it a directive? I mean,
9 does it have the force of an order, or is it a
10 suggestion?

11 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Fredrika, do you
12 want to answer?

13 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Sure. Yes, of
14 course. The Chief Medical Officer of Health has a
15 number of different powers or authorities at his
16 disposal and can issue directives and can also
17 provide guidance.

18 And in the case of testing, there have
19 been several directives that are specific to a
20 number of different settings, but some are specific
21 to LTC, and he also issues testing guidance that is
22 posted on the Ministry website.

23 I would say in addition to the guidance
24 that the Chief Medical Officer of Health provides,
25 individual ministries may also issue policies

1 related to testing and have done so, and those are
2 government decisions above and beyond what advice
3 that the Chief Medical Officer of Health may
4 provide.

5 And so there are examples in the case
6 of testing. You know, the Ministry of Long-Term
7 Care has established several policies related to
8 testing of asymptomatic long-term care home staff
9 and visitors that go above beyond the public health
10 guidance issued by the Chief Medical Officer of
11 Health.

12 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
13 But just help me with this: I thought that the
14 testing strategy expert panel, they're just one
15 input into the development of guidance. They don't
16 provide guidance; they provide input into the
17 development of testing guidance?

18 FREDRIKA SCARTH: That's correct. They
19 provide advice. They provide advice to the
20 Chief Medical Officer of Health. He considers that
21 advice, and he may have other inputs into his
22 decision-making.

23 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
24 But is the Ministry of Long-Term Care also
25 providing an input? I mean, you see, what was

1 confusing me is the testing expert panel provides,
2 I initially thought, guidance. So there's your
3 guidance.

4 But I take it they just provide input,
5 and other people are providing input to the
6 Chief Medical Officer of Health? But then --

7 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
9 -- he issues guidance?

10 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Correct.

11 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
12 Okay.

13 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Yeah. And --

14 MATTHEW ANDERSON: [Indecipherable].

15 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
16 Sorry.

17 MATTHEW ANDERSON: No, go ahead,
18 Fredrika. Go ahead.

19 FREDRIKA SCARTH: I was going to say, I
20 think if we look at the next slide, I'm happy to
21 describe the evolution of the testing guidance over
22 time, and I guess what I can say in general, coming
23 back to Dr. Allen's remarks about the earliest
24 stages of the pandemic, that the guidance provided
25 by the Chief Medical Officer of Health on testing

1 and testing eligibility has evolved throughout the
2 pandemic as the pandemic itself has evolved.

3 So the earliest guidance issued by the
4 Chief Medical Officer of Health was related to
5 people who may have had exposure due to travel, and
6 then when it was understood, when the science, you
7 know, revealed that there -- and the data revealed
8 that there might be community spread in Ontario,
9 the guidance evolved, and he provided guidance that
10 enabled testing or made people eligible for --
11 broadened the eligibility for testing to include
12 those with symptoms, with respiratory symptoms,
13 quite a wide range of respiratory symptoms.

14 So if you could move to the next slide?

15 So Dr. Allen described the period, you
16 know, the sort of period in January, February as we
17 were understanding how the virus was coming to
18 Canada from its origin point in Wuhan.

19 But as of March, the testing guidance
20 recognized that there was spread within Ontario,
21 and the testing eligibility was anyone
22 demonstrating symptoms, and that included, in
23 March, symptomatic long-term care residents and
24 staff. And there was additional -- you know, above
25 and beyond the guidance, there were directives by

1 the Chief Medical Officer of Health that enforced
2 this testing.

3 You can also see -- and so what's
4 highlighted on this slide are decisions that were
5 more specific to long-term care, but there was also
6 broad testing guidance that was being issued
7 through this period as well. And so you can see in
8 April, surveillance testing of asymptomatic
9 long-term care residents and staff added to the
10 guidance on symptomatic residents and staff.

11 And that testing of long-term care
12 residents and staff continued through the spring.

13 Later in the spring at the end of May,
14 the province expanded the testing guidance once
15 again. And so May 29th, the province issued a
16 broad framework called the Protecting Ontarians
17 Through Enhanced Testing Plan that broadened the
18 guidance again and at that stage enabled anyone who
19 felt that they may have been exposed, symptoms or
20 no symptoms, to access testing at one of the
21 testing sites.

22 So from May 29th, the guidance enabled
23 anyone who wanted a test to access a publicly
24 funded COVID test, and that broad guidance
25 continued through until September. And

1 September 24th, the Chief Medical Officer of Health
2 updated the guidance again to refocus testing on
3 those who were demonstrating symptoms and had
4 potential exposure to the virus.

5 All through this period, though, and
6 here's -- I think I just want to explain or provide
7 a little bit more detail on the relationship of the
8 testing expert panel and the advice provided to
9 these decisions.

10 Throughout this whole period, the
11 testing expert panel was looking at -- you know,
12 based upon data that was coming to us and the
13 results coming to us through targeted testing of
14 asymptomatic long-term care home staff and
15 residents, the testing expert panel was not
16 advising that we should continue testing
17 asymptomatic residents and asymptomatic staff.

18 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Low prevalence of
19 populations, I would just...

20 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Sorry. You're right,
21 Dr. Allen. Yes, in low-prevalence areas and
22 low-prevalence populations because we weren't
23 seeing a lot of positive test results.

24 So the Chief Medical Officer of Health
25 received this advice, the Ministry received this

1 advice, government did but made a decision to
2 continue the policy of testing asymptomatic staff
3 and visitors in long-term care as a precautionary
4 measure. And that testing has continued, and that
5 testing has increased in frequency recently.

6 And, you know, Olha will be able to
7 provide a lot more information on the policy
8 specific to long-term care.

9 But this is just to illustrate that the
10 advice provided by the expert panel is one input,
11 that the Chief Medical Officer of Health also looks
12 at other inputs and data and then issues guidance.

13 And it has changed, you know, as the
14 shape of the pandemic has changed and as we
15 understand that the areas of the province it's
16 affecting.

17 DR. DIRK HUYER: And if I may, I may
18 add something in there, Fredrika, if you were done
19 that particular slide.

20 So, Commissioners, if I may?

21 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
22 Sure. Go ahead.

23 DR. DIRK HUYER: Just go back to the
24 April, May period of time. So as you can see on
25 the slide that Fredrika's got, the asymptomatic

1 testing of long-term care residents and staff
2 starting April 15th.

3 As I understand it, and I could be
4 corrected on this, but I think I've got it correct:
5 During that period of time, the Chief Medical
6 Officer of Health and some public health units were
7 working together in specific long-term care homes
8 to evaluate not just outbreaks, which there was
9 testing occurring, but also in some homes, testing
10 for asymptomatic, as Fredrika has noted, to see if
11 there was benefit for doing that testing.

12 That was progressing, and then around
13 May 1st, there was a decision made -- not by the
14 Chief Medical Officer of Health -- to test all
15 residents and all staff in long-term care homes,
16 and that was to be done over a two-week period of
17 time.

18 That was May 1st to May 15th, and the
19 public health units were tasked with completing
20 that testing, either organizing it or doing it
21 themselves. And that was essentially to understand
22 the point prevalence, so what is present within the
23 long-term care home setting during that period of
24 time.

25 Because, as I understand it -- again, I

1 wasn't part of that decision, but as I understand
2 it -- I came into the decision around May 1st after
3 it was already happening.

4 It was my understanding that with the
5 increasing recognition of infections in long-term
6 care, there was concern that there were many people
7 in long-term care homes that may be infected and
8 not recognized as infected, and so that led to the
9 complete set of resident and long-term care home
10 tests being done, and that was over a two-week
11 period.

12 At the same time, the emergency child
13 care settings were also been tested, and those two
14 decisions were made, not following guidance from
15 the experts' testing strategy panel, but by other
16 decision-makers.

17 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
18 Who made that decision? If it's not made by the
19 Chief Medical Officer of Health, then who made
20 that?

21 FREDRIKA SCARTH: The decision
22 specifically to test all asymptomatic long-term
23 care home residents in April was a government
24 decision, so that was a decision made by the
25 Premier of Ontario and carried out.

1 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

2 Okay.

3 DR. DIRK HUYER: Yeah. And the role I
4 had around that time was to help facilitate and
5 just provide some support and coordination and kind
6 of keep track of what was going on during the
7 period of time.

8 So I was capturing data and supporting
9 the public health units in completing that testing.
10 So I would ask hospitals to help out or paramedics
11 to help out. That was kind of the role that I was
12 providing. Not a big scientific role in any way or
13 a medical role, more of a coordinating role in
14 trying to support the testing being done.

15 And then that led to some decisions
16 from analysis. We didn't have all of the data,
17 which Mr. Anderson spoke about earlier, about the
18 challenge of keeping track and understanding that
19 data from the OLIS system.

20 But what we found is when there was not
21 an outbreak and when there was no symptoms,
22 analyzing the data set that we had was .2 -- so
23 0.2 percent of the time, there was a positive test.
24 And what we weren't able to do is to drill down as
25 to whether that was a false positive or not false

1 positive. But if there was no COVID in the home,
2 so no outbreak and no symptoms, we did not find a
3 signific- -- we didn't find anything more than .2.

4 And that led to a decision to not
5 continue with asymptomatic testing on a routine
6 basis within long-term care home residents or in
7 retirement home residents.

8 So that was a decision point right
9 around May 19th, May 20th because we'd completed
10 the overall testing May 15th. It was around
11 May 19th, May 20th, just to give you a timeline
12 around those decisions, Commissioners.

13 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
14 Okay. So, Doctor, if you're continuing, go ahead.

15 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Sure. Wonderful.
16 Okay. So if we could go to the next slide?

17 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Just before
18 you do it, sorry, just the last comment there: So
19 there was a decision made not to test asymptomatic
20 long-term care residents in mid-May or whatever.

21 The decision since Wave 2 started, has
22 that decision been reversed, or is it still the
23 same?

24 FREDRIKA SCARTH: That is still the
25 same. So the policy -- you know, as I said, there

1 are two different policies to keep in mind through
2 this whole period. One is related to testing of
3 asymptomatic staff and visitors, and another policy
4 around asymptomatic residents. So asymptomatic
5 residents are not regularly tested, but the testing
6 of asymptomatic staff has continued throughout this
7 period.

8 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Thank you.

9 DR. DIRK HUYER: I'll just put a small
10 clarification that -- in the fact that if there's
11 an outbreak or if there's concerns of COVID, and an
12 outbreak can be one person or one staff, then
13 people with or without symptoms within that
14 facility will be tested broadly whether they have
15 symptoms or not.

16 So it's routine testing of asymptomatic
17 people, as Fredrika said, but to build on what she
18 said only.

19 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Mm-hm.

20 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Thank you.

21 Thank you, both.

22 OLHA DOBUSH: I would be happy to
23 provide Commissioners with some additional
24 information about the testing of residents and when
25 that occurs.

1 So just confirming that it has not
2 changed since that time, and currently, any
3 resident that is symptomatic will be tested for
4 COVID as well as if there is a known exposure or if
5 and as directed by Public Health as part of the
6 investigation of the suspected outbreak or
7 confirmed outbreak.

8 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Thank you.

9 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: So if it's okay,
10 Commissioners, we can move to the next ones. I
11 think we can go through these relatively quickly.

12 So in terms of the five different
13 components --

14 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
15 All right.

16 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: -- who should be
17 tested, and then there's how a sample is collected.

18 Of note, the gold standard specimen
19 collection type is a nasopharyngeal swab. This is
20 actually quite an invasive swab type, if you might
21 have received it or heard about it, but we do
22 know -- we have the most evidence for its efficacy
23 because it really gets to the sort of area where
24 the viral load would be the highest.

25 The challenge with this, though, is it

1 is a controlled act, and so it actually has a
2 limited number of healthcare providers that can
3 offer this, namely a physician or a nurse
4 practitioner, and it's also quite uncomfortable for
5 the patient. So for screening purposes, this can
6 be quite a challenge to be able to deliver serial
7 NP swabs over time.

8 So in that light -- next slide,
9 please -- there are other acceptable sample
10 collection types, and PHO has worked with
11 Ontario Health and the Ministry to really broaden
12 the range of options. And specifically, there's a
13 combination of throat and nasal, like, the end of
14 the nose that actually offers comparable
15 performance. And so there's a lot of supportive
16 material to offer different strategies for specimen
17 collection that are better.

18 I think the one challenge, though, is
19 the much easier specimen collection types, such as
20 nasal, do perform significantly less well than a
21 nasopharyngeal swab and have not been pursued as a
22 diagnostic preference particularly in long-term
23 care because we want to make sure the best tests
24 are offered to that setting. So it's always a
25 trade-off between the overall performance of the

1 test and the accessibility that those specimen
2 collection types offer.

3 We've also done some innovation in
4 terms of specimen collection types. So on the next
5 slide, there's been a lot of work on saliva, and
6 swish and gargle. Again, they're not the preferred
7 modality for someone who's either very at risk of
8 serious consequences of the disease but do offer
9 alternative options for specimen collection,
10 particularly in the realm of screening.

11 Next slide, please.

12 So then we get to the tests, so what
13 are the different kinds of tests that are offered.

14 So the gold standard for diagnostics is
15 the molecular tests, so this looks for the genetic
16 material of the virus. Again, the gold standard is
17 a nasopharyngeal swab, but you can use other
18 collection methods for it including throat and nose
19 as a good alternative. This is the best test to
20 determine whether someone has or does not have
21 COVID, particularly at a time when an individual is
22 symptomatic. No test is perfect, but it is the
23 gold standard.

24 The second group of tests are antigen
25 tests. These are what I describe as the

1 new-kid-on-the-block or the new-test modality, and
2 instead of looking for genetic material, these look
3 for proteins of the virus.

4 What's nice about these tests is
5 they're relatively portable. They're much easier
6 to use and don't need to be used in a lab-based
7 setting, but they are less sensitive than the
8 lab-based test. And what that means is there's a
9 risk of false negatives, so you can miss cases by
10 using them.

11 So I think there's a lot of optimism
12 and a lot of work going on. I think they will play
13 a very important role as we go forward, but the
14 modality for which they're probably going to be
15 most useful is for routine screening, so people
16 that are tested on a regular cycle who are
17 otherwise asymptomatic, and this can serve as an
18 early warning signal as opposed to a concrete
19 diagnostic tool.

20 The last test modality is not a
21 mainstay, but it's looking for antibodies or the
22 use of serology in blood, and until we have a
23 better understanding of the immune correlates of
24 COVID, this is not a primary modality. It may
25 become more useful once either we understand more

1 about the immunity and also when vaccines come out,
2 but for now, that's not a primary focus of the lab
3 testing strategy in Ontario or worldwide.

4 For all of these tests, there's
5 lab-based versions and rapid or point-of-care
6 versions, and a lot of the efforts underway are
7 really thinking about the safe and effective
8 deployment of some of the rapid modalities,
9 particularly in the context of long-term care.

10 Next slide, please.

11 So with respect to the rapid tests,
12 there's really three different sets, kinds of rapid
13 tests. There's one that's just really the
14 equivalent of a small cartridge. The analogy would
15 be it looks somewhat like a urine pregnancy test.
16 They're very portable, and one can use them in
17 various different contexts.

18 You still need some degree of training,
19 some degree of quality oversight but gives access
20 in a way that I think is very interesting to the
21 pandemic response [indecipherable] in Ontario.

22 The second --

23 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

24 Can I just...?

25 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Of course.

1 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
2 Are residents of long-term care homes eligible for
3 these rapid tests?

4 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: So they are, and
5 everyone on this call is very much involved in
6 that. I think they are -- there is very active
7 work to deploy these. The approach, though, is to
8 do these concurrent with lab-based testing until we
9 understand that they're safe.

10 So they will be deployed, and Olha and
11 Fredrika and Matt can all speak to them in more
12 detail, but yes, they will be there, but there is
13 not a lot of data to support them. So we need to
14 make sure that we're both fast in deploying but
15 also careful that we make sure that they work at
16 the same time.

17 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
18 But they're proved; otherwise, you can't deploy
19 them, right?

20 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Yeah, yeah. Yes.
21 But there's very little data, field data.

22 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
23 All right.

24 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Yeah. Sorry, can
25 we go back to the -- just to --

1 COMMISSIONER ANGELA COKE: Can I just
2 ask: For those tests, who can actually administer
3 them?

4 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: There was
5 legislative changes that Fredrika was more involved
6 in, but there's a broad range of healthcare
7 practitioners that can both collect specimens and
8 administer the test, and that was just changed on
9 Friday. [Indecipherable]. And for the full list,
10 we can send it to you unless others on the call
11 have --

12 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Yes, the test can be
13 performed by a physician, an NP -- a nurse
14 practitioner -- a registered nurse, a registered
15 practical nurse, a dentist, a pharmacist, a
16 community paramedic, or a community paramedicine
17 provider, so quite a broad range of providers now
18 that can perform rapid testing.

19 And as Dr. Allen noted, that's a reg
20 change that just came into force last Friday to
21 enable the broader use of these tests.

22 DR. DIRK HUYER: I think the only thing
23 to add into it along that question is, currently,
24 right now, the one rapid test is still a
25 nasopharyngeal swab.

1 And as you'll recall from Dr. Allen's
2 slide where the person is bent back on the neck and
3 as she described is somewhat intrusive, as I'm a
4 swab provider, I know how to do it, but it is
5 something that does require some additional work,
6 and it's not necessarily as accepted by many
7 people.

8 FREDRIKA SCARTH: So this is all quite
9 recent developments. So these tests, the first
10 rapid tests were approved in Canada by
11 Health Canada at the end of September and early
12 October, and the Federal Government has been
13 procuring these tests and has been allocating them
14 to the provinces.

15 We received our first supplies of these
16 tests toward the end of October. The one that
17 Dr. Huyer just described, the Panbio, which is an
18 antigen test with an NP swab, we just received on
19 October 30th. And as you can see, you know, we are
20 making regulation changes to enable their use, and
21 we have been providing them to the -- providing
22 them out to providers.

23 Long-term care homes are included in
24 those plans, and in particular, there are two uses,
25 really, in the long-term care context. The ID NOW,

1 which is a rapid point-of-care PCR test that we
2 have that is approved and we are using it in
3 Ontario now, will be supporting long-term care
4 homes for early outbreak identification.

5 So the sort of use case here or the
6 value of a rapid test in this context is that if
7 you have access to a rapid device which provides
8 you with a result within 20 minutes, 15 to
9 20 minutes, it can give you an early read on
10 whether you have, in fact -- whether the
11 symptomatic people that you're seeing in your
12 environment may represent a cluster of cases, and
13 that can support Public Health and much quicker
14 outbreak response.

15 The other way in which we hope that the
16 rapid tests will be helpful in the long-term care
17 home environment is as an alternative to the
18 routine staff testing, the routine staff
19 asymptomatic testing that's now being done with
20 PCR.

21 And we don't know yet know whether it's
22 going to be an acceptable -- as Dr. Allen noted,
23 we're trying to understand whether these tests are
24 accurate and safe enough to be used in highly
25 vulnerable environments like long-term care, but we

1 are piloting the use of the rapid antigen tests for
2 asymptomatic staff and visitor testing.

3 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
4 How would you determine that? If you're trying to
5 determine whether it's safe to give it to people,
6 and you haven't given it to them, how...?

7 Where's the data going to come from?

8 FREDRIKA SCARTH: So I probably
9 misspoke. It's not about whether it's safe to give
10 to people but certainly that the administration of
11 the test is safe, the procedure is safe. It's
12 collecting a sample in the same way that you would
13 collect a sample for any other test.

14 So the question is really is the test
15 accurate enough, and does it provide results that
16 we can trust and then take action on in the
17 long-term care home context.

18 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
19 When they approve it, when it's approved for use in
20 Canada, what does that mean?

21 FREDRIKA SCARTH: So Health Canada
22 provides -- Health Canada does regulatory approval,
23 and the regulatory approval tests the efficacy of
24 the test, and it tells us the test meets certain
25 thresholds of performance. And those thresholds

1 are -- you know, Health Canada reviews the data
2 that is provided by the test manufacturer to make
3 that decision and determination.

4 I think one factor, and I would sort of
5 turn to Dr. Allen here to elaborate on this, is
6 that the data that Health Canada looks at when it
7 makes its regulatory decision is typically a fairly
8 limited set of data that is in a lab setting, is in
9 a controlled setting or comes from the test being
10 used in a controlled setting.

11 And then, you know, what we're doing in
12 Ontario is using it in the field, in a wide range
13 of contexts and a wide range of users. And what we
14 know from other jurisdictions that have rolled out
15 rapid testing is that when they have gone from --
16 when they have gone and -- you know, when they have
17 implemented these tests in a wide range of
18 settings, you can see very quite different results
19 with a variety of users.

20 In long-term care homes specifically,
21 there was a rollout of rapid antigen testing across
22 the United States in nursing homes, and, you know,
23 nursing homes in different states saw very
24 different results with the tests, and some states
25 were concerned about the proportion of false

1 positives that they were seeing with these tests in
2 that context.

3 So what we were really trying to
4 understand is, what's the difference between the
5 sort of controlled lab-based data that we have for
6 these tests and how they will function in real
7 life.

8 Dr. Allen, though, if you'd like to --
9 if you would want to add to that?

10 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Yeah. So there is
11 that disconnect: They're just looking at how it
12 performs in a lab versus in the field, but I think
13 the other thing that's been a major shift in terms
14 of the approvals not just in Canada -- the same
15 thing is happening in the U.S. -- is that the
16 tolerance for performance has been lowered because
17 the thought is that these tests, if they're used in
18 different ways, you wouldn't need the same test
19 performance.

20 So what does this mean concretely?

21 So they're aiming for the antigen test
22 to have an 80 percent sensitivity. So what that
23 means is two out of every ten infections --

24 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
25 Right.

1 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: -- would be told
2 that they're negative when they're not, in fact,
3 negative. And what we don't know yet, and this has
4 to do more with the pandemic, is missing two okay?
5 Right? Like, are we okay with that approach,
6 particularly in a setting such as long-term care?

7 So we really need to understand what
8 are different ways to deploy these tests so we can
9 make sure that we use it in ways where it actually
10 protects individuals and it helps with the pandemic
11 response.

12 One way to do that, at least at the
13 beginning, is to offer this as a supplement to
14 existing testing programs. So in homes that are
15 already doing PCR screening of staff and visitors,
16 they would still receive the PCR tests weekly in
17 those contexts that are higher risk, and this would
18 be supplemented at the beginning with the antigen
19 test while we understand what the strengths and
20 limitations are.

21 Because it's so new, it's sort of --
22 the analogy might be, then, to the fact at the
23 beginning that we sent everything to NML. We knew
24 the test was good, but we want to be extra careful
25 given the population for whom we're serving.

1 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Can I
2 ask just a -- maybe this is unfair, but are there
3 going to be any issues in supply for all the
4 long-term care homes?

5 FREDRIKA SCARTH: In terms of rapid
6 tests specifically?

7 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Yes.

8 FREDRIKA SCARTH: No, we don't
9 anticipate any issues of supply. This is one area
10 that, you know, helpfully, the Federal Government
11 has procured significant numbers of both rapid PCR
12 and rapid antigen tests. In fact, they have
13 purchased, essentially, the entire production run
14 of two tests, and they're introducing a third, a
15 second antigen test.

16 So we do think we have enough of these
17 tests. I think, you know, the key thing that we're
18 working through right now is how are they best
19 used, and how can we make sure that they really
20 fulfill the purpose?

21 You can see on the slide, on the slide
22 that's on the screen right now, the sort of aims of
23 rapid testing, and as Dr. Allen noted, we see this
24 as an adjunct, as an additional layer, not a
25 replacement for lab-based PCR, which remains the

1 gold standard, but there are areas -- there are
2 aspects of our pandemic response where we think the
3 rapid testing can be very helpful.

4 So one of those is where we have
5 persistent challenges with turnaround time, most of
6 these have to -- many of these have to do with the
7 geography, but geography of the province, right?
8 So we have rural and remote areas where just the
9 sheer fact of having to transport a specimen over
10 long distance inevitably adds to the turnaround
11 time.

12 And so one of the ways -- we've been
13 speaking about long-term care here, but one of our
14 priorities for deploying rapid tests is to isolate
15 it in -- isolate it in more remote areas of the
16 province so that they can actually have rapid
17 results.

18 Even if some of those results need to
19 be confirmed with PCR, they still have access to
20 rapid results that they can work with in a shorter
21 time frame. So that is one of our -- so one of our
22 key priorities is to isolate the remote rural
23 communities.

24 The other that we've been speaking
25 about is enabling rapid action in the context of

1 outbreak. So we do hope that rapid testing will
2 prove to be of value. We're quite confident on
3 this: They will be of value in the context of
4 early outbreak identification.

5 So if you have rapid tests at a setting
6 like a long-term care home, then you'll be able to
7 use those to quickly identify whether you have an
8 outbreak, so whether you have a cluster of cases
9 and can take quick action as determined by
10 Public Health.

11 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
13 But it moves so quickly --

14 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Mm-hm.

15 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
16 -- that you wouldn't have a lot of time to make up
17 your mind that you're going to -- that somebody's
18 tested positive, and now you're going to rapid test
19 everybody in the home to see, to try to contain.

20 You wouldn't have much time to make up
21 your mind, right?

22 FREDRIKA SCARTH: So this is -- no, we
23 wouldn't, and I don't know, Dr. Huyer, if you'd
24 want to speak to this, and these are the kinds of
25 decisions that Public Health officials make as they

1 work with homes that are -- you know, when they
2 identify early and when they identify an outbreak.

3 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

4 So that wouldn't go to a table? The decision to do
5 that would go to, what, the local medical officer
6 of health? Like, who would be deciding, trying to
7 figure this out and make a decision?

8 DR. DIRK HUYER: Yeah, that'd be the
9 local public officer of health, and there are
10 supports available beyond that, if necessary, but
11 the local public health officer would manage that
12 outbreak. And as Mr. Anderson talked about earlier
13 and Dr. Allen talked about, there's a process for
14 testing those outbreak samples.

15 They go all in together; they get
16 prioritized so we get a turnaround very quickly of
17 those results. Not as quick as the ID NOW as
18 Fredrika was talking about, but absolutely, once
19 there's the idea -- so they have that fairly
20 quickly, and those that were in close contact to
21 that initial person would be separated and cohorted
22 off, isolated to not potentially spread to others
23 is the hope and the goal.

24 But it'd be the local officer, medical
25 officer of health, yes.

1 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

2 So go ahead.

3 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Okay.

4 FREDRIKA SCARTH: Okay. Maybe we'll go
5 to the next slide. I think we've described overall
6 the rapid testing program, and maybe, Vanessa...

7 DR. VANESSA ALLEN: Yeah. This is just
8 a summary, I think, of those uses. So, you know,
9 essentially diagnostics, the gold standard needs to
10 be PCR, and at no point would we recommend at this
11 point that it be replaced by a rapid test, but the
12 rapid tests do have incredible promise both as this
13 early signal to reduce the turnaround time in areas
14 where turnaround time is important and particularly
15 in long-term care and as a screening test of purely
16 asymptomatic, and that would require frequent and
17 onsite screening.

18 So I think we will see exactly where
19 that does support the efforts, but I think a lot of
20 effort has gone into making sure that this is done
21 in a way that is both expedient, which I didn't
22 highlight before, but also measured.

23 So next slide, please.

24 So we've gone over most of these, but
25 just in terms of the considerations: So very

1 innovative; the potential is to identify more cases
2 and have more rapid identification.

3 There is another piece of information,
4 which is there's some thought that the antigen
5 tests might better target those that are most
6 infectious; I think we still require data to
7 support that. And overall, increase the test
8 capacity in the province given that
9 laboratory-based PCR is very, very
10 labour-intensive, and there is a certain amount of
11 capacity that's not expandable.

12 With respect to cons, again, very
13 limited data on field performance, and we really
14 need to have that data to make sure that it's safe.
15 We want to make sure that we don't give people
16 either false reassurance or false identification or
17 that there are strategies to mitigate against that.

18 The other critical component is just to
19 reinforce that these tests in and of themselves are
20 not a prevention strategy and that they must be
21 offered in tandem with robust critical prevention
22 strategies. This is already a foundation of the
23 work in long-term care, but the White House example
24 is an unfortunate example of where testing was used
25 as the sole modality of prevention.

1 We still require some quality in
2 reporting infrastructure, so these tests do require
3 some amount of training and checking and making
4 sure that they still work and making sure that the
5 test results get to those who need them. And so
6 there's been a lot of work to sort that out over
7 the last weeks to months.

8 The other consideration that has been
9 described is really that the specimen collection
10 types have been limited to date, particularly for
11 the antigen or the small cartridge test. There is
12 work underway to see if we can explore alternative
13 ways of specimen collection, either by working
14 through the company or looking at other options.

15 Next slide, please.

16 And the last piece is they may seem
17 small, but the results reporting -- again,
18 Mr. Anderson described that we have a myriad of
19 different lab information systems, and getting
20 results to those who need them has been a
21 tremendous effort.

22 There's been some incredible success
23 but still some way to go, and particularly, again,
24 in some of the long-term care settings, the
25 clinician who orders it may have a different

1 practice, making sure that the fax number is the
2 fax number at the home where people can act on
3 those results as quickly as possible is a very good
4 example, and there's been several examples where
5 that needs to be streamlined.

6 So that work, all of the long-term care
7 homes' fax numbers are actually being confirm- --
8 have been confirmed, but those small things make a
9 big difference in terms of getting results to
10 people quickly.

11 And then lastly, results
12 interpretation: Again, no test is perfect, and
13 it's often helpful to have supports for the
14 interpretations, so false positive results can
15 occur and providing advice for how these results
16 are interpreted for ultimate action. So there's
17 been a lot of consultation and participation, but
18 there's also a 24-hour-7 microbiology service for
19 assistance with that interpretation at the moment.

20 So with that, I'll pass it, I believe,
21 back to Dr. Huyer.

22 DR. DIRK HUYER: And I'll pass over to
23 Ms. Dobush. Olha, do you want to go ahead?

24 OLHA DOBUSH: Yeah. If there are no
25 questions, Commissioners, for Dr. Allen, then I can

1 continue.

2 So this slide presents the overview of
3 the approach for testing requirements in the
4 long-term care sector.

5 So staff, which we have covered to some
6 extent already, surveillance testing is currently
7 in place. Effective this Monday, it is mandatory.

8 Here is the Minister's directive for
9 employers, meaning operators, to test staff, which
10 also extends to students and volunteers, and the
11 testing requirement is currently biweekly if the
12 home is located in the green and yellow areas and
13 zones and weekly if the home is located in orange,
14 red, and lockdown zones.

15 The requirement to provide proof of
16 similar testing frequency is also extended to
17 visitors, caregivers, and support workers. They
18 need to provide proof of a negative test to be
19 granted entry into the home.

20 For residents, as I have already
21 briefly mentioned, testing occurs if a resident
22 displays symptoms and as part of the admission or
23 re-admission and as part of the outbreak
24 investigation or management as directed by public
25 health unit.

1 The next slide actually talks a little
2 bit about the evolution of the guidance as well as
3 the requirements and direction for the long-term
4 care sector in the area of testing, and it
5 highlights a number of answers to the questions
6 that, Justice Marrocco, you had raised earlier in
7 terms of who is providing the direction or the
8 guidance.

9 So the colour-coding on this particular
10 slide, in addition to providing the timeline, it
11 also identifies where the direction was provided
12 through which authority. And as you can see, most
13 of the guidance and directives for long-term care
14 sector followed Public Health guidance; however, in
15 addition, there were some additional directions
16 that went above and beyond the Public Health
17 guidance and directives, and this is primarily in
18 the area of staff surveillance testing.

19 I will also highlight, as the question
20 came earlier in the presentation, about sort of,
21 you know, in the early days.

22 So on March 9th, the communication went
23 out to the sector stating that all symptomatic
24 tests, symptomatic residents, their tests will also
25 be tested for COVID. So this was the earliest time

1 that testing was communicated in terms of the
2 long-term care sector.

3 So the next slide talks about the
4 current work to enhance COVID testing in long-term
5 care homes. We have raised through Dr. Allen's
6 presentations and through Mr. Anderson's
7 presentation about the specimen prioritization
8 protocol currently for long-term care homes.

9 We are also actually this week rolling
10 out a number of training webinars, particularly
11 targeting the technical knowledge and information
12 about specimen collection, about transportation,
13 about packaging, requisition for preparation to
14 enhance the quality of both specimen collection as
15 well as providing these specimens to the lab for
16 testing.

17 And additionally, the implementation of
18 the rapid test is also very actively being
19 considered and deployed in the long-term care
20 sector.

21 I will stop here, if there are any
22 questions. Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):

24 So the rapid testing is being deployed in the
25 long-term care sector?

1 OLHA DOBUSH: That's correct,
2 Justice Marrocco. We have been working with a
3 number of operators. Right now, the interest in
4 being the early users or early trial pilot site
5 users is we have heard the interest from six large
6 operator chains, and we have deployed the testing
7 kits to those operators.

8 And we are still finalizing the
9 clinical and the program guidance to be provided to
10 the sector so that they can start actually using
11 them; however, the work in terms of deployment and
12 preparation and the shipment of tests has already
13 occurred or is underway.

14 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
15 Okay. When you speak to -- could they have said
16 no? Like, did they refuse?

17 OLHA DOBUSH: Yes, participation is
18 voluntary.

19 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
20 Oh, okay. All right. Thank you.

21 OLHA DOBUSH: I could just add --

22 DR. DIRK HUYER: For the Panbio --
23 we're talking about the Panbio, though, right?
24 Well, I mean --

25 OLHA DOBUSH: Yeah.

1 DR. DIRK HUYER: You may have already
2 understood this, Commissioner, because I'm
3 sometimes slow to keep up, but just the mandatory
4 testing to the operators from the Minister's
5 directive is that the operators are to make sure
6 the staff get tested on a regular basis at one week
7 at a time right now and then the two weeks in the
8 not-as-bad areas of Ontario. So that's the
9 operators that need to mandate that.

10 The people could still refuse, and the
11 operators need to make the decisions what they're
12 going to do with their employees that don't
13 continue to do the tests.

14 But the Panbio itself is being deployed
15 with -- I think as Dr. Allen talked about earlier,
16 both the Panbio test will be done and a PCR test
17 will be done right now so there's more field
18 experience.

19 So have I got that right, Olha? Just
20 to make sure that we have a better field of
21 understanding, don't want to take a chance with a
22 test that isn't fully understood, and Dr. Allen may
23 have more to add and Olha as well. That just -- I
24 think that's where they're all right.

25 OLHA DOBUSH: Thank you, Dr. Huyer, and

1 I would concur that clarification that the testing,
2 surveillance testing of staff as well as the
3 requirements on the visitor testing, that is
4 mandatory; however, the deployment of Panbio, given
5 that this is an early pilot-type of deployment, is
6 voluntary.

7 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
8 Okay.

9 OLHA DOBUSH: I think that concludes
10 our presentation.

11 MATTHEW ANDERSON: Yep.

12 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
13 Well, are there any -- I don't think the
14 Commissioners have any further questions.

15 I just want to thank you for this.
16 It's an area that we really were anxious to get
17 some understanding of, and this has certainly
18 helped us understand the state of testing and how
19 it evolved. And all information relative to
20 long-term care facilities is a matter of importance
21 to us.

22 That, of course, is our perspective,
23 and we don't have any broader perspective or any
24 broader interest. We're only really looking at
25 this from the long-term care home point of view or

1 with that interest in mind.

2 And so thank you very much for a very
3 helpful presentation.

4 MATTHEW ANDERSON: Thank you.
5 Thank you for the time and the Commission. We
6 really appreciate it.

7 COMMISSIONER FRANK MARROCCO (CHAIR):
8 Thank you. Bye-bye.

9 COMMISSIONER JACK KITTS: Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER ANGELA COKE: Thank you.

11 DR. DIRK HUYER: Continue great work,
12 by you all.

13

14 -- Adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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FOOTNOTE

23

24 1 Page 12: OLIS actually stands for Ontario
25 Laboratories Information System

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, OLIVIA ARNAUD, CSR, Certified
Shorthand Reporter, certify:

That the foregoing proceedings were
taken before me at the time and place therein set
forth;

That all remarks made at the time
were recorded stenographically by me and were
thereafter transcribed;

That the foregoing is a true and
correct transcript of my shorthand notes so taken.

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PER: OLIVIA ARNAUD, CSR

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