



April 14, 2020

Joint statement from Participation House and Markham Stouffville Hospital

This afternoon we are sharing that 37 of the 42 Participation House residents have tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, 12 staff members have tested positive. This is deeply upsetting news for residents, staff and their families.

Over the weekend, Markham Stouffville Hospital quickly assembled a rapid response team to support Participation House. The hospital has been providing guidance on infection control and patient care, and HR support to assist Participation House with their urgent staffing needs. The hospital's kitchen is preparing some meals for residents and they have provided PPE and infection control supplies. Family physician, Dr. Jane Philpott, has been redeployed from the hospital's assessment centre to Participation House to provide clinical support.

At this time, the residents are being supported on an interim basis by existing staff and onsite and virtual support from Markham Stouffville Hospital. To assist with the response, York Region Public Health and York Region Paramedic Services continue to coordinate infection prevention and control measures, conduct extensive case management and contact tracing of confirmed cases and have provided much-needed supplies. There continue to be a number of challenges and the hospital is working with Participation House on sustainable solutions for staffing, medical support, infection control expertise and supplies.

"Our hearts go out to the residents and their families as we face this challenge. I want to reassure our residents and their families that, with the support of the hospital, we are providing the care that is needed. We are working quickly to ensure that we have a sustainable system to provide the care that is needed on an ongoing basis as we work through this outbreak."

-- Shelley Brillinger, Executive Director, Participation House

"This is a very difficult situation for everyone involved. I want to thank the team at Markham Stouffville Hospital for acting so quickly to support the staff and residents at Participation House. Our priority now is making sure that the outbreak is contained and that the residents are cared for safely and compassionately"

-- Jo-anne Marr, President and CEO, Markham Stouffville Hospital

“This is a challenging time for those who work at Participation House, the people in their care, and for their families and loved ones. I had the chance to speak with Executive Director, Shelley Brillinger over the weekend and I want to thank her, her team, Mayor Scarpitti, and the team at Markham Stouffville Hospital for their dedication and support as we all work to address this outbreak. Our regional team continues to work closely with all partners, and Minister Elliott and I are working to ensure that they have the supports they need to keep both staff and residents safe.”

– Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

“Ensuring long-term care and other community care settings implement all necessary outbreak control measures is our top priority. We are also exploring additional protective measures, including pushing for more stringent guidelines for group homes and requesting more Personal Protective Equipment. We thank all our partners for their hard work, particularly Participation House for their ongoing commitment to advocating for the welfare of their residents.”

– Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region Medical Officer of Health

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