

Ministry of Health

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From the very outset of the COVID-19 outbreak, we have been driven by a clear commitment to protect the health and wellbeing of all Ontarians. This has included taking decisive action to stop the spread of this virus and ensuring the province's readiness to respond to a wide range of new outbreak scenarios.

The government's immediate priority since the very beginning of this outbreak has been to significantly expand both acute and critical care capacity in our province's hospitals, including the number of ventilators.

As part of this response, Ontario Health, an arms-length Crown agency, has worked with critical care experts and bioethicists to develop a clinical triage protocol to support frontline physicians in the event the system is faced with the near-impossible circumstances that require the allocation of severely constrained critical care resources caused by a major surge. To be clear, this protocol is a draft document developed by Ontario Health. It has not been approved or authorized by our government.

We believe that a human life cannot be valued differently. As such, Ontario Health has been asked to consult with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, as well as human rights and key community experts, to make certain that any medical protocols that may be required during this outbreak do not disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, older persons, Indigenous communities and racialized people.

If hospitals are indeed faced with near-impossible circumstances, those critical decisions must be left with those highly-trained medical professionals providing care on our front lines. They are best positioned to make those difficult decisions, on an individual basis.

We would like to once again thank you for your ongoing and considerable efforts in supporting Ontario's continued response to COVID-19. Together, we will stop the spread of this virus and protect the health of all Ontarians, including and especially our most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Christine J. Elliott in blue ink.

Christine Elliott
Deputy Premier
and Minister of Health

Handwritten signature of Todd Smith in black ink.

Todd Smith
Minister of Children, Community
and Social Services

Handwritten signature of Raymond Cho in black ink.

Raymond Cho
Minister for Seniors
and Accessibility