



## **Halton Hills Long-Term Care Home Announces Mandatory Vaccinations** *Bennett Centre Long-Term Care joins coalition of 15 not-for-profit homes*

Halton Hills, ON (September 16, 2021) – A frustrated group of 15 Ontario not-for-profit and municipal long-term care and retirement homes today criticized government for failing to introduce mandatory vaccinations and announced they will instead do it themselves.

“Our residents and staff are on the front lines of this province’s battle with COVID-19,” said Soo Wong, Executive Director Bennett Centre Long-Term Care, one of the 15 homes in the coalition. “Within the long-term care sector there were heartbreaking losses of life over the first three waves of the pandemic. We simply can’t take chances with the lives of our most vulnerable citizens and must ensure Bennett employees are safe. When the provincial government did not act on this urgent Covid-19 issue, Bennett Centre Long Term Care decided to act.”

Ontario has begun to see breakthrough infections impact its long-term care homes, including deaths of some vaccinated residents. Scientists and public health officials recommend higher rates of vaccination within the population as the best way to prevent infection and death.

Members of the not-for-profit and municipal coalition will make mandatory vaccinations a condition of employment, both for existing and new staff. The policies will go into effect over the next number of weeks.

The 15 coalition homes are:

- Bennett Centre Long Term Care, Georgetown
- Bob Rumball Home for the Deaf, Barrie
- Cedarhurst Dementia Care Home, Toronto
- Chester Village, Toronto
- Copernicus Lodge, Toronto
- Fairview Mennonite Home, Cambridge
- Greenwood Court LTC, Stratford
- Idlewyld Manor, Hamilton
- Mitchell Nursing Home, Mitchell
- Nithview Community LTC, New Hamburg
- Parkwood Mennonite Home, Waterloo
- Ritz Lutheran Villa, Mitchell
- St. Peter’s Residence At Chedoke, Hamilton
- Lennox and Addington County General Hospital, Napanee
- The Wexford Residence Inc., Scarborough

Through AdvantAge Ontario, an association representing 213 not-for-profit and municipal long-term care homes in the province, the coalition of homes had asked government to implement mandatory vaccinations for all health care workers.

The Ontario government's current position on vaccinations requires individual homes to develop their own policies. The resulting patchwork policy environment will leave individual organizations more susceptible to legal challenges and will mean different standards of care for residents across the province.

AdvantAge Ontario is therefore considering a pooled legal fund for its members. "Our members are not deep-pocketed corporations," said Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer of AdvantAge Ontario. "They are often stand-alone homes run either by a volunteer board, or, in the case of municipal homes, by local officials. It's deeply frustrating that government is putting not-for-profit homes in a position where they may have to spend money on lawyers, rather than the people they care for."

Bennett Centre Long-Term Care has not yet determined its position on the pooled legal fund.

Among Canadian provinces, Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta and New Brunswick have all developed or are developing mandatory vaccination policies for health care facilities.

"What is Ontario waiting for?" asked Levin. "I fear there will be more preventable deaths in long-term care before they finally act."

Ontario's not-for-profit homes put all surpluses back into operations to continually increase the level and quality of care they offer.

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### **About Bennett Centre Long-Term Care**

Bennett Centre Long-Term Care is part of Bennett Village, a not-for-profit organization, located in Halton Hills. We provide a friendly, homelike environment for residents, including caring staff that strive to provide family like, resident-centered care and services to residents every day.

### **About AdvantAge Ontario**

AdvantAge Ontario has been the trusted voice for senior care for over 100 years and is the only provincial association representing the full spectrum of the senior care continuum. Our more than 400 members are located across the province and include not-for-profit, charitable, and municipal long-term care homes, seniors' housing, assisted living in supportive housing and community service agencies.

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