



COVID-19  
FLATTEN THE CURVE

# PROTECT HEALTH CARE WORKERS

May 20, 2020

**TORONTO** – Unifor welcomes the Ontario government’s announcement to launch an independent commission to investigate Ontario’s Long-Term Care (LTC) system, so long as a manageable patient to staff ratio is put in place and recent changes such as pay increases and worker protection are maintained.

“The devastating reality is that it took a pandemic for Doug Ford’s government to understand just how broken the system really is in Ontario,” said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President. “I welcome this announcement, but this inquiry must take on new urgency to protect LTC residents and workers. Unions, along with coalition partners and health officials have already seen consecutive governments ignore their calls to fix the crisis.”

Yesterday the Ontario government announced that it would launch an independent commission into Ontario’s long-term care system, to begin in September. The details of the commission, terms of reference, reporting timelines and membership have yet to be announced.

The last Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes, following the Wettlaufer tragedy, concluded in July 31, 2019, and included recommendations that the Government of Ontario increase staffing levels in LTC homes.

“Ontarians are relieved to see their government take action during a crisis and start valuing long-term care workers,” said Naureen Rizvi, Ontario Regional Director. “There are deep-rooted issues in the sector that cannot be ignored after this crisis, and progressive measures such as premium pay cannot be revoked while workers wait for the findings of this commission.”

Unifor supports the call from the Ontario Health Coalition that the commission should not be controlled by any partisan group or by long-term care owners and operators. The union believes the commission must be transparent, open to the public, and include input from residents and their families, and health care workers. This inquiry must be an aggressive fact finding mission with the final report delivered and acted on with urgency.

Unifor is Canada’s largest union in the private sector and represents 315,000 workers in every major area of the economy. The union advocates for all working people and their rights, fights for equality and social justice in Canada and abroad, and strives to create progressive change for a better future.

Information about the union’s response to the pandemic, as well as resources for members can be found at [unifor.org/COVID19](https://unifor.org/COVID19).

To arrange for interviews, in-person or via Skype or FaceTime, please contact Unifor Communications Representative Hamid Osman at [hamid.osman@unifor.org](mailto:hamid.osman@unifor.org) or 647-448-2823 (cell).