

To:

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
The Honourable Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care

June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Honourable Premier and Minister Fullerton,

We, the undersigned as individual clergy and religious leaders, from a broad range of faith communities throughout Ontario, are endorsing this letter written by the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC).

Each of us, and the religious institutions we are part of, are responding to the many ways in which COVID-19 has affected Ontario residents.

While faith communities are finding new ways to worship online, as we engage in social distancing, our concern is growing about the needs of those we care for through pastoral care and outreach. Those on the margins – the impoverished and the elderly – have been especially hard hit through this pandemic.

We express our appreciation for your overall leadership during this time of crisis. However, we are gravely concerned about the tragic impact the pandemic has had on long term care homes. While we acknowledge that the problems in long term care extend back over a series of governments, your government's failure to take appropriate action prior to the outbreak has undoubtedly contributed to the current consequences.

In particular, your government has failed to:

- fully implement the recommendations from the Gillese inquiry and especially those related to staffing increases
- follow up on the unanimous vote on Second reading on Bill 43 during the previous Parliament to implement the minimum daily average of four hours of hands on front line nursing and personal care
- increase funding to meet actual need, let alone by increases in the cost of living and in acuity

We note with appreciation your promise to establish a Commission to conduct a review of the province's long-term care system. While we would have preferred a full Public Inquiry to review the entire impact of COVID-19 on the Province, we agree that the situation in long term care is so extreme that it requires more speedy attention. We do urge you to establish the broader public inquiry once we have emerged from the main impact of the pandemic.

This pandemic has caused tremendous damage, not just in the loss of life and the physical impairment to those infected survivors, but also trauma to their family members and the general public. The establishment of the Commission and the conduct of its mandate, will have to meet a high standard for the public to be able to restore their trust in long term care and confidently arrange for their family members to be admitted into these homes.

## **Membership and Mandate**

The Commission and its staff must be fully independent of home operators and other special interests. The proceedings and records of the Commission must be completely open and transparent and it must collect timely and relevant documentation, from residents and their family representatives, front line workers and their unions and other community advocacy groups as well as from the academic community, in order for the public to be confident that real change will be made in the Long Term Care program.

The scope of the Commission needs to consider the severity and concentration of the COVID-19 outbreak in long term care homes, with a view to ensuring that this kind of tragedy can never happen again.

We are sadly aware that COVID-19 was not the first indication that the delivery of Ontario's long-term care has serious systemic flaws.

- There has been ongoing understaffing and a failure to deliver the amount of care residents need.
- There is a chronic shortage of workers of all classifications willing to work at these homes.
- The extensive use of part-time staff has resulted in many care workers finding it necessary to seek and secure additional part time positions at other homes.

For-profit long-term care homes have had a much higher incidence of infection and death. (Toronto Star article: [For-profit nursing homes have four times as many COVID-19 deaths as city-run homes, Star analysis finds](#))

## **Necessary Outcomes**

We look to the Commission to develop better standards, enforceable staffing regulations, and an improved funding formula. All these will be needed to enable the public to have confidence that family members admitted to these homes can live the remainder of their lives in decency and respect.

## **Interim Measures**

The establishment of the Commission, however, should not delay the immediate implementation of measures to reduce the tragic consequences of COVID-19 now while the current outbreak continues to run its course:

- Better infection control including better access to PPE.
- Ramp up testing using our province’s full public capacity.
- Transfer to hospitals those residents who cannot be properly treated in long term care homes.
- Bring in family caregivers and retired nurses as soon as possible.
- Address the chronic critical understaffing in long-term care by finally implementing the long promised minimum of an average four hours of hands-on frontline nursing and personal care and by mandating Employers to provide the same total hourly compensation to part-time employees that is provided to their full-time counterparts.

### Public Access to Information

To ensure that there is transparency of information about the current impact of the pandemic in our long-term care homes, the Government should immediately post on its public website;

- accurate and consistent data for each home on the number of infections,
- the number of deaths, and
- the staffing levels by shift and classification of front-line nursing and personal care personnel,

so that families can, even in advance of the outcome of the Commission, make more informed decisions as to which home to seek admission to for their family member.

We look forward to hearing from you that you will accept our requests for the composition, mandate and process for the Commission and that the identified interim remedial relief measures are being implemented.

Signed:

Name

Leadership Title & Faith Affiliation

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|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Rev. Brian McIntosh  | Clergy, Bloordale United Church                |
| 2. Rev. Dr. Susan Eagle | Chair, ISARC; Clergy – United Church of Canada |
| 3. Imam Abdul Hai Patel | Islam  |
| 4. Rev. David Black     | Clergy (retired) – United Church of Canada     |
| 5. Rabbi Jordan Helfman | Rabbi, Holy Blossom Temple – Jewish            |

(Signatures Continued...)

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 6. Rev. Sung Ran Kim                  | Clergy – United Church of Canada  |
| 7. Rev. Jeffrey Brown                 | Chaplain – Unitarian Universalist   |
| 8. Rev. Frances Combs                 | Volunteer Pastoral Associate – United Church of Canada                                    |
| 9. Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl          | Rabbi Emeritus, Beth Tzedec Congregation – Jewish   |
| 10. Rev. Jessica McCrae               | Clergy – United Church of Canada  |
| 11. Rev. Kim Falls                    | Clergy – United Church of Canada  |
| 12. Rabbi Erin Polansky               | Jewish  |
| 13. Michael Russell                   | Baha'i  |
| 14. Rev. Dr. Ted Harrison             | Clergy, Trinity United Church, North Bay ON   |
| 15. Rev. Peter Thompson               | Hospital Chaplain (retired) – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 16. Rev Karen Ptolemy-Stam            | Clergy – St Paul's United Church  |
| 17. Rev. Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa | Executive Minister,<br>Antler River Watershed Regional Council<br>United Church of Canada |
| 18. Rabbi Lawrence Englander          | Jewish  |
| 19. Rev Carol-Ann Chapman             | Clergy – United Church of Canada  |
| 20. Rabbi Edward Elkin                | Rabbi, First Narayever Congregation – Jewish  |
| 21. Rabbi Tina Grimberg               | Jewish  |
| 22. Patricia James                    | Clergy – United Church of Canada  |
| 23. Angus MacLennan                   | General Council Commissioner – United Church of Canada                                    |
| 24. Heather Mackey                    | Family Ministry Director – Yorkminster Park Baptist Church                                |
| 25. Sandra Kirby                      | Chaplain at 2 LTC homes – United Church of Canada   |
| 26. Laurel Rothman                    | Social Justice Committee, Congregation Darchei Noam – Jewish                              |
| 27. Faye Moffatt                      | Licensed Lay Worship Leader – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 28. Brian Parsons                     | Conference President – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                                   |
| 29. Adam Cresswell                    | Lay Leader – United Church of Canada  |
| 30. Daniel Smith                      | Past President, St Francis Xavier Conference<br>Society of Saint Vincent de Paul          |
| 31. Dr Charles Barrett                | Chair, Social Justice Network of the Ontario Regional Councils<br>United Church of Canada |
| 32. Linda Dollard                     | President, Ontario Regional Council<br>Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                   |
| 33. Frances Parkin                    | Official Board, Metropolitan United Church  |
| 34. Rabbi Cory Weiss                  | Rabbi, Temple Har Zion – Jewish   |
| 35. Rev. Elizabeth Mackenzie          | Clergy – United Church of Canada  |
| 36. Vera Taylor                       | Past Board Chair – United Church of Canada  |
| 37. Dr. Alice Marion Pope             | Diaconal Minister, Retired Public Health Nurse, Nurse Educator<br>United Church of Canada |
| 38. Rev. Lauren Hodgson               | Clergy – United Church of Canada  |
| 39. Elin Goulden                      | Social Justice & Advocacy Consultant<br>Anglican Diocese of Toronto                       |
| 40. Rev. Steven Loweth                | Clergy – United Church of Canada  |
| 41. Wilda Wilson                      | Director of Music – United Church of Canada   |
| 42. Linda Instance                    | Chair of Council – United Church of Canada  |

(Signatures Continued...)

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|---------------------------------|--|
| 43. Almut Brenne-Davies         | Nurse Practitioner – Primary Health Care (NP-PHC)<br>Anglican Church of Canada |
| 44. Rev. Alexander Wilson       | Clergy – Presbyterian Church of Canada   |
| 45. Dr. John McLean             | Board Chair, Grace United Church, Barrie                                       |
| 46. Ryan Friedman               | Congregation Darchei Noam – Jewish   |
| 47. Sally Jo Martin             | Committee Chair – Humber Valley United Church                                  |
| 48. Rev. Daniel Reed            | Clergy – United Church of Canada   |
| 49. Nicholas White              | Board Member – United Church of Canada   |
| 50. Rev. Dr. E. Bruce Misener   | Clergy (retired) – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 51. Sylvia Cohen                | Board Member – United Church of Canada   |
| 52. Rabbi Shalom Schachter      | Rabbi, Toronto Board of Rabbis – Jewish  |
| 53. Rev. Betty Lou McNabb       | Clergy – United Church of Canada   |
| 54. Rev. Douglas duCharme       | Clergy – United Church of Canada   |
| 55. Doris Major                 | Chair, Local Church Council – United Church of Canada                          |
| 56. Larry Gillman               | President, Beth Israel Synagogue, Peterborough – Jewish                        |
| 57. Rev. Eduard Prinselaar      | Clergy (retired) – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 58. Karen Harvey                | Regional Representative, Bond Head United Church                               |
| 59. Rev. Steven Loweth          | Clergy – United Church of Canada   |
| 60. Rev. Susan J Thompson       | Clergy (retired) – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 61. Denise Waltenbury           | President, St. Kevin's conference<br>Society of Saint Vincent de Paul          |
| 62. Lois Marshall               | Secretary Outreach Team, Grace United Church, Barrie                           |
| 63. Fontaine Waite              | Spiritual Director – Roman Catholic  |
| 64. Kathy Kitchen               | Pastoral Care Chair, Humber Valley United Church                               |
| 65. Rev. Jason Meyers           | Minister for Congregational Care, Metropolitan United Church                   |
| 66. Dr Marion Frendo            | President, East Niagara Particular Council<br>Society of Saint Vincent de Paul |
| 67. Dr. Mark Smilovic Smiley    | Rabbi, Toronto Board of Rabbis – Jewish  |
| 68. Rabbi Audrey Pollack        | Rabbi, Solel Congregation of Mississauga – Jewish                              |
| 69. Rev. Debbie Johnson         | Clergy – United Church of Canada   |
| 70. Rev. Dr. A H Harry Oussoren | Clergy (retired) – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 71. Jack Wilson                 | Board Chair – United Church of Canada  |
| 72. Rev. Calin Lau              | Clergy – United Church of Canada   |
| 73. Rev. Nancy Hardy            | Clergy – United Church of Canada   |
| 74. Dr. John Klassen            | Faculty of Theology (retired) – United Church of Canada                        |
| 75. Rabbi Catharine Clark       | Jewish   |
| 76. George Isaac                | Treasurer, Dalston-Crown Hill United Church                                    |
| 77. Rev. Ross Leckie            | Clergy – Caledon East United Church  |
| 78. June Cavers                 | United Church Women, President – United Church of Canada                       |
| 79. Dorothy Sjöholm             | Outreach Team, Grace United Church, Barrie                                     |
| 80. Rev. Meriel Simpson         | Clergy – United Church of Canada   |
| 81. Peter Farwell               | Trustee – United Church of Canada  |
| 82. Donna Wice                  | Resource Team Leader – United Church of Canada                                 |
| 83. Mary McHarg                 | Chaplain (retired) – United Church of Canada                                   |
| 84. Dr. Nancy Sullivan          | Council Member, Wesley Mimico United Church                                    |
| 85. Rabbi Irit Printz           | Jewish   |

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| 86. Bruce Galbraith            | Music Director, Scarborough Bluffs United Church                     |
| 87. Dave Leslie                | President, Windsor Essex – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul          |
| 88. Rev. Sue Campbell          | Clergy – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 89. Rev. Lois Brown            | Clergy – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 90. Emily Caruso Parnell       | Board President, Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, Sudbury<br>Jewish       |
| 91. Daniel Bourne              | Chair, Advocacy Committee – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul         |
| 92. Alana Martin               | Youth Minister – United Church of Canada                             |
| 93. Maj. Colin Bain            | Director, Support Services – The Salvation Army                      |
| 94. Jeannette Schieck          | Regional Council Rep, Midhurst United Church                         |
| 95. Rev. Sarah Miller          | Clergy – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 96. Deacon Scott Knarr         | Outreach and Music Minister<br>Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada |
| 97. Rev. James Bindernagel     | Clergy (retired) – Lutheran  |
| 98. Kathleen Magladry          | Chair, Embrace Action – United Church of Canada                      |
| 99. Rev. Dr. Ed File           | Clergy (retired) – United Church of Canada                           |
| 100. Rev. Bruce Sweet          | Clergy – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 101. Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo     | Clergy – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 102. Rev. Felicia Urbanski     | Clergy – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 103. Moon Ja Park              | Intercultural Diverse Network – United Church of Canada              |
| 104. Rev. Marg Murray          | Clergy – United Church of Canada                                     |
| 105. Natasha Fransblow         | Jewish   |
| 106. Bernard Amlin             | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 107. Catherine Hass            | Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                                     |
| 108. Carol Devine              | Volunteer – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                         |
| 109. Pauline Mwangi            | United Church of Canada  |
| 110. Alan Read                 | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 111. Barry Hirschberger        | Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                                     |
| 112. Lisa Hirschberger         | Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                                     |
| 113. Mary-Louise Hinch         | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 114. Connie Elkin              | Anglican Church of Canada  |
| 115. Helen Bromley             | Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                                     |
| 116. Anne Nykolaychuk          | Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                                     |
| 117. Valerie Morello-Claessens | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 118. Paul Harper               | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 119. Patricia Wynne            | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 120. Margaret Buist            | United Church of Canada  |
| 121. Gerald Claessens          | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 122. Dora Johnston             | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 123. Susan Bliley              |  |
| 124. Karen Felker              | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 125. John Davidson             | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 126. Stephen Freeman           | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                 |
| 127. Karen Holmes              | United Church of Canada  |
| 128. Margaret Walsh            | Roman Catholic   |
| 129. Bernie Hartlin            | Treasurer – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul                         |

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| 130. Catherine St Pierre   | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul             |
| 131. Lorene DiCorpo  | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul             |
| 132. Heather Walsh   | United Church of Canada  |
| 133. Ernie Forsyth   | United Church of Canada  |
| 134. Diane Davis   | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul             |
| 135. Kathryn Gloster   | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul             |
| 136. Anne Stancek  | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul             |
| 137. Lynn Underwood  | United Church of Canada  |
| 138. Roberta Noble   | United Church of Canada  |
| 139. Randy Taylor  |  |
| 140. Maureen Hall  | United Church of Canada  |
| 141. Carol Kitney  | United Church of Canada  |
| 142. Deborah Waitson   |  |
| 143. L. Maureen Maguire  | United Church of Canada  |
| 144. Michael Maher   | Roman Catholic   |
| 145. Laura Lane  | Lawrence Park Community Church, United Church of Canada          |
| 146. Michelle Christie   | United Church of Canada  |
| 147. Ephraï Mwaura   | Heart Lake United Church   |
| 148. D. Rosemarie Hinzmann   | United Church of Canada  |
| 149. Linda Boehm   | Roman Catholic   |
| 150. Dianne Cheetham   | United Church of Canada  |
| 151. Denise Waltenbury   | President, Kevin’s Conference – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul |
| 152. Doris Doyle   | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul             |
| 153. Debra Laing   | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul             |
| 154. Beatrice Arnill   | Clergy (retired) – United Church of Canada                       |
| 155. Murray MacAdam  | Retired Staff, Anglican Church of Canada                         |
| 156. Imam Abdul Hai Patel  | Imam; Founder & Trustee, Ansaar Foundation – Islam               |
| 157. The Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Office, Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul |  |
| 158. John De Schutter  | Conference Member – Society of Saint Vincent de Paul             |