



Mayor of Markham

For immediate release

April 17, 2020

Progress at Participation House. More action needed now. **Statement from Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti**

It has been seven days since a COVID-19 outbreak was declared at Participation House, however they are still experiencing a critical shortage of skilled medical staff and personal support workers.

Earlier this week, I had called on Premier Doug Ford to issue a provincial directive and use every mechanism available to get resources and medical support to homes like Participation House, which should be operating as a healthcare facility during this public health emergency.

Today, the Ontario Government issued a new temporary emergency order under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, which provides Local Health Integration Networks with the ability to safely reassign front line staff to areas they are needed most including long-term care homes and supportive housing.

I would like to thank Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care for taking this action. Local Health Integration Networks have been given a mandate and I am calling on them to act immediately.

If it means we have to call on medical personnel from the Canadian Armed Forces to provide emergency help to homes struggling to cope, then that is what we need to do, and we need to do it now. We cannot let another several days go by.

Progress has been made, the team at Markham Stouffville Hospital has been supportive and continues to coordinate to get additional staff to Participation House, a doctor has also visited the home and assessment of patients continues, along with extra nursing support. Last week, I put out an urgent call for personal protective equipment (PPE) for Participation House and we were touched by the immediate and overwhelming response. Thank you to everyone who has generously donated. However, mask, gloves and gowns were only the beginning; we now need medical personnel on the ground to care for those who cannot care for themselves.

We have a collective responsibility to care for and protect the residents of Participation House and we need action now. We should be doing better than this. We owe them every effort.