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May 28, 2020

Dear Team Members,

I want to thank all of you for the extraordinary work these past few months. We continue to be deeply saddened by the impact of the pandemic on our most vulnerable and, with the developments from this past week, I wanted to keep you informed.

On May 26th, we received a copy of a report by the Canadian Forces (CAF) listing observations from Altamont Care Community where their Augmented Civilian Care (ACC) unit has been working alongside our team members since April 27th. I know the findings were troubling for all of us to hear. It is important to keep in mind that these observations were made on the arrival of members of CAF when the staffing situation was dire and the home was in crisis. We are validating the observations with CAF and believe some do not accurately reflect the circumstances.

Our commitment to our residents, their families, and our team members is to continue to work with CAF, our health partners and government to make sure the concerns identified in the report are addressed. Altamont has continuously evaluated and implemented – including with the support of CAF and our health care partners – additional measures, processes, and protocols in line with provincial and public health directives and requirements, to care for and protect our residents and staff during this crisis.

In particular, COVID-19 has had a severe impact on staffing at residences impacted by COVID-19. To deliver the level of care that our residents deserve, the staffing challenges we face in the long-term care sector must be addressed. As the CAF report notes, we are already working to increase staffing levels and bend the infection curve. We are committed to working with the government, and our health system partners, to improve this urgent issue.

We are also working with the Government of Ontario to better understand the announcement that they will be “appointing temporary management” at our Altamont and Camilla residences. We look forward to the continued collaboration and enhanced partnering with Trillium Health Partners and the Scarborough Health Network to achieve sustainability at both residences over the coming weeks.

We know that each one of you and the entire team at Sienna have consistently gone above and beyond in extraordinary circumstances to provide care and compassion to residents and to engage with families. I particularly want to recognize and thank the team at Altamont and Camilla – all of whom have demonstrated tremendous heroism.

We will get through this, as we are all in it together, and we appreciate and value your extraordinary work and commitment at this very difficult time. I am deeply grateful for the dedication of our team and health partners who continue their demanding work providing care and services to residents during this unprecedented time.

With gratitude,

Lois Cormack,
President & CEO