

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO OUR COMMUNITY:

We have all heard the tragic stories of the front lines of health care—we know of the unprecedented exhaustion, pressure and trauma that nurses, doctors, paramedics, environmental services staff and allied health professionals are coping with. The pressures on the health care system are enormous.

What may not be as obvious, is the crisis unfolding within congregate (communal living) settings. Congregate care settings are organizations that house some of our community's most vulnerable people. This letter is being sent on behalf of a group of leaders of our community's congregate settings.

OUR COMMUNITY'S MOST VULNERABLE

The pandemic has demonstrated once again, that those most at risk in our community for contracting the virus are often the same people who are most at risk for—everything else. They are the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the homeless, the disabled, the elderly and ill. They are children and youth in transition, or living with neglect or abuse. They are individuals who are differently abled or struggling with mental health, and those using substances to cope. They are women at risk, locked down in their own homes with an abusive partner. They are essential workers in grocery stores, warehouses and manufacturing facilities who don't have sick benefits and don't have the social capital or support to refuse unsafe work during this pandemic.

These are the people we serve and care for. They are the reason that we are awake in the middle of the night—hoping we can keep our respective facilities and services free from an outbreak—while we daily track the case counts and trends, which can make us feel anything but hopeful.

It was Mahatma Ghandi who said "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members." We believe in the greatness of our community, which is why we are asking for your help.

OUR PLEA

We are asking you to dig in. To dig deeper. Despite being tired and frustrated, please consider your actions and the impact they may have on people who may not have the same resources and privileges that you do. Please help us protect the most vulnerable people in our community.

Stay home as much as you can. Wear a mask. When it's your turn, get vaccinated. By doing so you are helping us save lives.

Respectfully,

The Congregate Care Settings Group of Dufferin and Caledon:

Bethell Hospice, Caledon Community Services, Choices Youth Shelter, Community Living Dufferin, Dufferin Area Family Health Team, Dufferin Child and Family Services, Family Transition Place, Hospice Dufferin, Kerry's Place, Lord Dufferin Centre, Oliver House, Pine River Institute, Shelburne Long Term Care Home and Retirement Community, SHIP, and South Bridges Care Community