



Transition to antigen COVID testing underway at The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre

February 8, 2021 – Ottawa, Ontario

Effective Tuesday, February 16th, The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre will switch over to the new antigen COVID-19 tests for everyone entering our long-term care home at Russell Road, except for the residents themselves. Changes ordered by the province require all staff, students and volunteers to be tested at least twice weekly using Abbott Laboratories' Panbio antigen test. Essential caregivers providing supplementary care and companionship to residents, must be tested every time they enter.

"We are working overtime to ensure that we have the right people, right processes and right resources in place to ensure the health and safety of all of our residents and staff," says Mary Boutette, Chief Operating Officer. "Our focus is on ensuring that the stringent infection prevention and control measures that have kept our residents COVID-free for more than three months are not compromised."

One of the principal challenges the home is facing is the chronic shortage of trained personnel. In the midst of the pandemic, Perley Rideau is recruiting and training new staff as quickly as possible.

"We are closely monitoring to ensure continuity of care throughout the centre and are maximizing the use of technology," says Jen Plant, Director of Clinical Practice and Privacy Officer. "Beginning February 10, use of the screening app we implemented last year will be mandatory. Everyone entering the building must log in and complete screening, whether using their computer, smartphone or one of the iPads located inside the main entrance."

Use of the antigen test is limited to individuals who are asymptomatic. Those with COVID-19 symptoms or who test positive will continue to require "confirmation" testing utilizing the standard PCR test. A new testing clinic has also been established in the Perley Rideau's main building. All other infection control measures, including masks, hand washing, physical distancing and PCR testing of the centre's residents remain in effect.

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre employs a staff of more than 800 people and is supported by more than 400 volunteers. It is one of the largest not-for-profit long-term care homes in Ontario. The Perley Rideau community of care includes 450 long-term care beds and a Seniors Village with 139 independent-living apartments for seniors.

**Questions may be directed to Jay Innes, Director of Communications,
via Telephone: (613) 526-7170, ext.2207 or Email: info@prvhc.com**

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre is one of the largest and most progressive long-term care homes in Ontario. In addition to the 450 long-term care beds for Veterans and members of the public, the Perley Rideau campus includes a Seniors Village with 139 independent-living apartments. It employs a staff of more than 850.