



**Statement regarding Highland Wood Lessons Learned and Draft Action Plan  
For Immediate Release: February 21, 2020**

**For more information, please contact:**

Carolyn Plummer  
President and CEO  
Haliburton Highlands Health Services  
[cplummer@hhhs.ca](mailto:cplummer@hhhs.ca)  
Phone: 705-457-2527 or 705-457-1392, Ext. 2242

---

In early 2019, the Highland Wood Long-Term Care home located at the Haliburton site of Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) experienced significant leaking in the roof, which led to the safe evacuation and relocation of residents to other long-term care facilities in the region. Once the roof was replaced and with support of the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN), residents began to be repatriated to Highland Wood in June of 2019.

During the evacuation event, HHHS put a number of emergency protocols and procedures into place, and took steps to address some of the challenges facing residents and families, including providing transportation services and arranging for counselling services to help provide support.

Once the repatriation was completed, it was critical that HHHS took time to reflect deeply on the experiences of residents, family members, staff, and managers. For this reason, HHHS contracted an external, third-party, experienced facilitator to lead a 'Lessons Learned' process, which included focus groups for all Highland Wood stakeholders and offered those who were not able to attend in-person the option of providing feedback by letter or email. Approximately 37 stakeholders provided HHHS with their feedback, which was then compiled into a report by the facilitator and used to inform the creation of a draft Action Plan. This plan was then reviewed with Highland Wood residents, family members, staff and managers on February 19 and 20, 2020, and additional information gathered from these sessions will be used to create a finalized Action Plan.

What was clearly heard throughout the debriefing and feedback sessions with Highland Wood stakeholders was that the evacuation and subsequent repatriation were emotionally traumatic experiences for residents, their loved ones, and members of the HHHS team. In meetings this week, HHHS acknowledged the significant impact of the event that occurred and committed to moving forward with the steps outlined in the Action Plan to ensure that the organization as a whole is better prepared for an emergency event in the future.

(continued.../2)

***Statement regarding Highland Wood Lessons Learned and Draft Action Plan  
For Immediate Release: February 21, 2020 - CONTINUED***

The Action Plan maps out a number of steps to be implemented immediately (in the first 3 – 6 months), in the medium term (6 – 18 months), and in the longer-term (18+ months), and includes various actions to address the distress caused by the event, improve emergency and continuity planning, improve communications, and improve fairness and equity. Moving forward, HHS is deeply committed to working together with interested residents, family members, and staff, as well as our partners in the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care, and the Central East LHIN, to provide safe, dignified, and high-quality care for all long-term care residents at Highland Wood and Hyland Crest.