

Hon. George Smitherman  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Main Legislative Building  
Room 447  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A4

5/14/2007

Honourable Minister,

**Re.    alPHA Resolution A05-3, Health Care Facilities Evacuation Plans**

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On behalf of member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA), I am writing today to re-introduce the attached Resolution for anticipated follow-up and action by your Ministry.

Most health care facilities (HCFs) have basic plans to evacuate staff and patients during an emergency situation, but there is no legal requirement for these plans to address further steps to be taken once evacuees are outside the doors of the facility. Given that evacuees of HCFs are more likely than not to have special needs, evacuation plans for these types of facilities must be subject to requirements that account for these needs once they are outside of the building, including isolation, transportation and relocation to ensure continuity of care.

alPHA is therefore urging the Government of Ontario to develop and/or amend legislation such that all HCFs, including long-term care homes, be required to have written evacuation plans that include, as a minimum, the isolation, evacuation, transportation, relocation of residents/patients to a collection centre or other facility and details on their continuity of care.

Formalizing such requirements would require consultation with EMS providers, hospitals, long-term care homes, municipalities and other key stakeholders. We look forward to speaking with you further about these issues, and as always, look forward to opportunities in assisting in addressing them. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

*ORIGINAL SIGNED*

Linda Stewart,  
Executive Director

**Copy:** Dr. George Pasut, Chief Medical Officer of Health (Acting)  
Allison Stuart, Director, Emergency Management Unit, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

**Encl.**

**2005 aPHa Resolution A05-3**

**TITLE                   Health Care Facilities- Evacuation Plans**

**SPONSOR:            aPHa Advocacy Committee**

**WHEREAS** health care facilities (HCFs), including long-term care homes, need to provide on-going care for their residents/patients in emergency situations that may require evacuation from their facility; and

**WHEREAS** there is no specific legal requirement for HCFs to develop, maintain and test evacuation plans that include the isolation, evacuation and relocation of residents/patients; and

**WHEREAS** the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation does not require HCFs to develop such evacuation plans; and

**WHEREAS** the Ontario Fire Code has specific requirements for fire safety plans that do not adequately address evacuation of residents/patients of HCFs; and

**WHEREAS** most HCFs evacuation plans that do exist identify how to evacuate the building but do not specifically address the isolation, evacuation and relocation of residents/patients and continuity of care; and

**WHEREAS** there is a requirement under the *Ambulance Act* for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers to provide emergent patient transportation; and

**WHEREAS** the transportation of large numbers of residents/patients from HCFs would likely exceed the capacity of local EMS providers; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** aPHa urges the Government of Ontario to develop and/or amend legislation such that all HCFs, including long-term care homes, are required to have written evacuation plans that include as a minimum the isolation, evacuation, transportation, relocation of residents/patients to a collection centre or other facility and details on their continuity of care; and

**AND FURTHER THAT** such legislation also require HCFs to practice and evaluate their evacuation plans on a regular basis; and

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Government of Ontario consults widely with EMS providers, hospitals, long-term care homes, municipalities and other key stakeholders to implement such legislation; and

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Premier of Ontario, Ministers of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Commissioner of Emergency Management, Fire Marshall, AMEMSO and AMO are so advised.