



April 16, 2020

To Federal, provincial, and territorial officials responsible for housing,

We are writing on behalf of the Canadian Alliance of Non-Profit Housing Association (CANPHA), an umbrella group of provincial and national non profit housing associations. Like all of you, we have watched with dismay and shock at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our members in the non profit housing sector, and most importantly, their tenants. We have appreciated the efforts of all of you in implementing measures to protect the safety and security of non profit housing providers and tenants.

One of the key issues of concern that has been raised from across the country is the lack of access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for housing providers. As you know, non profit housing organizations provide access to affordable housing, which includes a range of functions, including provision of ongoing maintenance functions. Community housing providers also typically provide one on one support and service to tenants who are often part of a vulnerable population – this support ranges from ongoing physical or mental health care to daily engagement and checks on the well being of tenants. While some non profit housing organizations work in partnership with health departments, often for meal programs or support services, others provide support in the absence of funding or health care partnerships.

Given the importance of staying at home identified by every major public health department in the country, housing providers are clearly one of the most important essential services available in Canada today. Whether it's maintenance or ongoing supports, the provision of housing related services is vital. However, during the current pandemic, it also puts staff working for housing providers at great risk of contracting the virus. This risk is heightened as we are now receiving reports of tenants living in non profit housing who have already contracted the COVID-19 virus.

As such, we are requesting that you include housing providers in the allocation of PPE when it becomes available. We know that access to PPE is not a concern unique to the housing sector, nor a concern unique to Canada; we understand that front line health care workers from Canada and around the world have also raised significant concerns regarding access to PPE. We would point out however that housing providers face similar concerns and risks as front line health care workers and other professions dealing with a population at risk, and when you are able to secure adequate PPE in your jurisdiction, to set aside a portion of that supply to housing providers. As essential service workers, protecting the safety of non profit housing staff and support workers is a top priority.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues in these difficult times. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we would be happy to discuss further.

Yours truly,



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