



February 10, 2021



Cynthia Davis
President and CEO



Dr. Tony Stone
Chief of Staff

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

Thank you for your continued support of Lakeridge Health and for your efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19.

As we continue to fight the pandemic together, we again find ourselves in a state of emergency with the second provincial lockdown in the course of the last year. With people staying at home except for essential trips to work, necessary shopping, and medical appointments, the spread of COVID-19 has shown some decline in Durham over the last couple of weeks. Nonetheless, we continue to treat a significant number of patients with COVID-19 within our hospitals.

In addition, while serving you, we are supporting the provincial response to the pandemic, doing our part to care for Ontarians from other regions due to the pressure COVID-19 places on some of our hospital partners. We will call on these same partners to help us, should we need them.

Even as we all experience the fatigue of dealing with this pandemic, our frontline teams demonstrate extraordinary resilience and commitment to the people who need specialized health care services in our community. Our teams are working tirelessly and have been innovating and introducing new processes to ensure the delivery of safe, high-quality care.

Vaccine Update: Progress Continues with Priority Populations

With the new year came the hopeful rollout of the first COVID-19 vaccines. Lakeridge Health is proud to be one of the Ontario hospitals to distribute the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Through the on-site vaccine clinic at Oshawa Hospital and our mobile vaccination clinic, we have already administered over 15,000 vaccines to priority populations: residents, staff, and essential caregivers of long-term care homes and retirement homes, as well as high-risk health care workers.

Our current focus is to support Phase 1 of vaccine rollout in Ontario. In collaboration with Durham Region Paramedics and Public Health, we are working to distribute vaccines as fast as possible and, based on the supply of vaccine, to protect those vulnerable groups identified in Phase 1.

We know many of you are anxiously awaiting news of further rollout of approved vaccines. At this time, our clinic is unable to provide vaccination appointments to the general public. For more details of Ontario's vaccine rollout plan, please visit the [Ministry of Health website](#) or [Durham Region Public Health website](#). We will be working in partnership over the coming months with our partners to ensure the vaccines get to you as quickly as we receive them.

Virtual Urgent Care Clinic: Accessing Care from your Home

Improving access to health care services continues to be a priority at Lakeridge Health, especially during the pandemic. Building on the success of other virtual care services for programs, such as outpatient dialysis, mental health services, and rehabilitation, Lakeridge Health has launched a new Virtual Urgent Care Clinic.

The new clinic works much like a walk-in clinic for non-life-threatening situations, only the care is accessed through a mobile phone or WiFi-enabled computer from almost anywhere. Patients can connect through a secure network to speak to a physician and receive medical advice, medication prescriptions, and a referral, if needed. If you are interested in accessing the virtual clinic, please visit www.lh.ca.

Scheduled Surgeries

As we prepare for further surges of people with COVID-19 who need an inpatient admission, Lakeridge Health has made the difficult decision to reduce the number of scheduled surgeries at the Oshawa Hospital and Ajax Pickering Hospital at this time.

Our goal is to continue to do as many surgeries as possible, while providing a safe environment for all. While every surgery is critical to the person who needs it, at this time we have been able to replace any postponed inpatient surgeries with a patient requiring day surgery or other outpatient services. As we see the number of people sick with COVID-19 increase, we may have to postpone a larger percentage of scheduled surgeries.

We are reviewing every surgery to determine how we can continue to meet the needs of our patients. As always, we are making these decisions using an ethical framework and in alignment with our values. We will resume the regular volume of surgeries as soon as we are safely able to do so.

COVID-19 Testing: Don't Delay if You have Symptoms

Early testing is key to fighting this virus. If you or anyone in your household feels unwell, we urge you to immediately book a COVID-19 test at Covidswab.lh.ca. Delaying increases the risk of unknowingly spreading the virus.

There are six COVID-19 Assessment Centres and three satellite sites across Durham Region. Additionally, a Mobile COVID-19 Testing Bus is now bringing testing capabilities into the community – to housebound seniors or those unable to travel to a testing site. Thank you to the Durham Region Paramedics for leading this initiative and for helping the most vulnerable in our community. Please visit our [website](#) for testing centre locations and operating hours.

Please Remain Vigilant

We recognize “COVID fatigue” is very real. But now, more than ever, we need your help. Please remain vigilant by following the basic safety protocols: staying at home, only leaving for essential purposes, reducing contact to only those we live with, washing our hands often, and wearing a mask when outside our social bubble.

Research increasingly shows that racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. This month, as we recognize **Black History Month**, it is important that we continue to be vigilant to protect and support all members of our diverse Durham Region community.

Black History Month is a time to honour the many significant achievements and contributions of Black Canadians who have shaped Canada's journey to become a more diverse, compassionate, and prosperous nation. We have many activities and announcements planned throughout the month. This includes participating in Durham Region's *Together We Rise* virtual campaign. Watch our video [here](#) and see some of our leaders explain how Lakeridge Health is working to build an inclusive culture that celebrates each other's differences.

We encourage you to join us and participate in the many activities happening across Durham Region and beyond to recognize Black History Month and to support the ongoing movement for equality, equity, and social justice.

We have all been called upon to use our skills and knowledge to care for our patients with compassion and kindness. As we continue to fight this global pandemic, we are moving forward on our transformational journey toward an integrated system of care across the health care continuum to be there for those who need us the most.

Please stay well and safe.

Best regards,

Cynthia Davis
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