



**Lakeridge
Health**

April 8, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbours of Durham Region,

Thank you for your heartfelt wishes, acts of kindness, and donations of critical protective equipment as we collectively respond to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic within our community.

The efforts of everyone in Durham Region to stay home, practice physical distancing and take personal responsibility to stop the spread of COVID-19 are critical.

At Lakeridge Health, we are extremely grateful for the community's unwavering support for our team who works tirelessly to provide safe and excellent care.

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 – It's Up to All of Us

As has been widely reported in the media, the pandemic is expected to be with us for weeks and months to come. It is up to all of us to take the necessary steps to stem the spread of this virus and to protect family members, friends and neighbours, especially the most vulnerable amongst us. Shared safety relies on everyone's commitment to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet between ourselves and others, and to only leave home for essential purposes.

As we head into the first long weekend of the Spring, many of us will have to dramatically adjust the way we celebrate together. There are many creative ways we can mark the Easter weekend while strictly adhering to physical distancing. If all of us make this temporary sacrifice, we can protect those we love and the community at large.

People with symptoms such as a fever, cough or shortness of breath should immediately contact a primary care physician or Durham Region Health Department and complete an online COVID-19 assessment form at www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca. People who are very ill and need urgent medical attention should go to the emergency department – Lakeridge Health hospitals are committed to providing safe, excellent care when you need it.

As the community does its part to combat the pandemic, Lakeridge Health is also working around the clock to keep patients and our front-line teams safe and to ensure acute care services are there for everyone who requires hospitalization or emergency care. Here are the new measures we are taking.

New Visitor Restrictions

To further protect our patients and care providers, we are currently allowing one visitor a day in only three specific situations: paediatric patients (under 16 years of age), women in labour and people who are at the end of life. To stay connected with loved ones, patients can use bedside phones, and use apps or email on their personal devices. We recognize nothing replaces the physical presence of a loved one, however, these proven measures will keep us all safe.

Masks for Staff and Visitors

In addition to active screening at all entrances, all team members and visitors are provided with a procedural mask upon entering any Lakeridge Health facility. Along with physical distancing, these masks protect others from exposure to infection from team members, patients and visitors who may develop early symptoms while at our hospitals.

Update on Temporary Postponement of Surgeries and other Services

Lakeridge Health and hospitals across Ontario have made the difficult decision to suspend all non-emergent surgeries as well as other non-emergent clinical services. We continue to provide all emergency surgeries and some urgent and time-sensitive surgeries and procedures. We will begin to offer non-emergent surgeries and other activities as soon as we are safely able to do so. Please visit our website (the left menu on the COVID-19 web page) for a current status of surgeries, tests, cancer care and other ambulatory clinics at Lakeridge Health.

Preparing for an Increase in Hospital Admissions

Lakeridge Health has doubled its critical care capacity and opened designated units at Oshawa and Ajax Pickering Hospitals to care for seriously ill patients requiring treatment for COVID-19. We are actively planning to expand our capacity including staffing, equipment and space, in anticipation of a surge in hospitalizations in the coming weeks.

How to Help

The global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) means that Lakeridge Health has limited supplies of some items for front-line teams and patients. In addition to carefully managing our supplies, Lakeridge Health is seeking donations of commercially produced PPE. Contact COVID19GIVING@lh.ca to arrange a PPE donation and visit our web site and click on the “Personal Protective Equipment Needed” button for a list of supplies and drop-off instructions. Lakeridge Health’s Foundations are also calling for donations to support team wellness and other needs.

Thank you again for your incredible support! Your contributions and compassion make all the difference to everyone at Lakeridge Health.

Wishing you good health,

Susan deRyk
Interim President and CEO

Dr. Tony Stone
Chief of Staff