



**Lakeridge
Health**

March 26, 2020

Dear friends and neighbours of Durham Region,

The global COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented moment in our lives. It is impacting every one of us every day.

During this challenging time, and as always, the safety of patients, our team and the Durham Region community is our top priority at Lakeridge Health.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many, many members of our community who have rallied in support of our incredible team members who are working tirelessly to provide excellent care and keep everyone safe.

With the number of people affected by COVID-19 on the rise, Lakeridge Health is implementing measures to respond to the surge in cases in our community and to plan ahead. In our March 18 letter, we shared some of the difficult and necessary decisions that we have made to protect patients and team members, as well as care for the acutely ill and vulnerable people who need our services.

Today, we want to share further steps we have taken to ensure patients and our team remain safe, and to proactively support the organization to nimbly adapt within the rapidly changing environment.

Carefully managing our supplies and equipment

There is currently a global shortage of certain personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical equipment needed in the fight against this new virus. Lakeridge Health, as all hospitals across Ontario, has been impacted by this. In response, we are taking several actions to manage supplies and plan for the expected increase of people with COVID-19 who need inpatient care at a hospital in Durham.

We are actively securing PPE through the regular supply chain, and, at the same time, using other innovative procurement strategies.

We have reached out to our primary care physician partners and other health care providers such as dentists as well as local business to collect any surplus PPE including surgical masks. **The response has been incredible.** Our friends, colleagues and local businesses have donated, delivered and provided many important items from masks, to gloves, to face shields, to swabs used to test for COVID-19.

Our team is doing its part by conserving PPE supplies without compromising their own safety, or the safety of others. We are all focused on carefully managing our supplies and optimizing our use of them.

Temporarily postponing surgeries and reducing ambulatory services

Last week, in response to the need to conserve PPE, we made the difficult decision to suspend all non-

emergent surgeries as well as other non-emergent clinical services. This is consistent with the Minister of Health's recommendation to Ontario hospitals.

Similar to other GTA hospitals, we continue to provide all life and limb surgeries. We will begin to offer non-emergent cancer surgeries and other high-priority activities as soon as we are safely able to do so.

We commit to providing an update next week on this situation as we know postponing any surgery or procedure is distressing for patients and their families.

Expanding Assessment Centres for Durham

This week we will be opening a COVID-19 Assessment Clinic at Ajax Pickering Hospital. This is in addition to the first Assessment Centre in Oshawa. Since the Oshawa Centre opened earlier this month, 2712 people have been referred for assessment with 287 patients tested.

There are many things the community can do to help

We need to make this a team effort. If we can minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Durham, we will all benefit. To stay healthy, wash your hands regularly and use alcohol-based sanitizer. Keep yourself safe. Stay home when you are ill, cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze and avoid touching your face. Keep practicing social distancing, avoid groups and stay home as much as you possible. It's important to stay calm and focus on taking care of yourself, and your family, friends and co-workers – we anticipate that COVID-19 will be with us for months to come so we will need to adapt.

Keep Current

Visit [Lakeridge Health's COVID-19 web page](http://www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca) at www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca for the latest information.

Thank you again for your tremendous support and acts of kindness over the last few weeks. It means the world to all your friends at Lakeridge Health.



Susan deRyk
Interim President and CEO



Dr. Tony Stone
Chief of Staff