



**Lakeridge
Health**

May 15, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

Springtime is always a time for renewal. This season has a special significance this year as we learn to live and work in new ways as we will all need to manage the risk posed by this novel coronavirus for some time to come.

Over the past week, we continued to see fewer new cases of the virus in Durham Region. To date, 109 people who were admitted to Lakeridge Health for COVID-19 have recovered and returned home.

Meanwhile, we continue to work with system partners in supporting the residents and staff in long-term care and retirement homes, which have been affected by COVID-19.

To successfully recover from COVID-19, the evidence suggests taking a go-slow approach to easing restrictions on everyday life.

This week, the Ontario Government extended the state of emergency until June 2 to support efforts to slowly reopen the province while mitigating the community spread of COVID-19. There is clear evidence that the current restrictions on public gatherings and physical distancing reduce viral transmission. Retaining the emergency orders will enable the safe ramp up economic activity. The government also announced that starting May 19 certain stores, seasonal businesses, workplaces, and outdoor spaces and activities can reopen, if they meet public health guidelines.

Staying Safe this Long Weekend

Many people look forward to celebrating together on Victoria Day weekend. This year, we are all being asked to mark this holiday at home, and to celebrate at a distance with those outside of our immediate households. Hopefully, we will all take some time to get outside and enjoy the fresh air and sun. Walking, gardening and other outdoor activities are completely safe with social distancing.

Wearing a non-medical mask or homemade cloth mask in public is an additional measure you can take to protect yourself and others in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. public transit or while shopping).

Planning to reschedule surgeries and procedures

The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly hard for people awaiting surgeries and medical procedures. Last week, the Ontario Government provided a framework for how hospitals can plan to



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ramp up the non-emergent surgeries and procedures that have been postponed while we worked to get the virus under control.

Lakeridge Health is currently developing a thoughtful plan for rescheduling many surgeries that have been delayed. This will need to be done in a phased manner over many months to ensure everyone's safety as we deliver care and treatment in this new paradigm.

It will take time until we are back to pre-COVID-19 service levels, but we are moving in the right direction. Please visit Lakeridge Health's website for more information.

Bringing Care into the Community

The virtual health solutions that have expanded during the pandemic will be lasting features of our health system and welcome options for patients and families in Durham Region. To date, Virtual Connections has supported nearly 700 visits between patients at Lakeridge Health and their loved ones. Our Virtual Ward program is monitoring and supporting another 106 COVID-19 patients at home. This week we launched a Mental Health and Addictions Clinic that offers professional telephone-based counselling and support to anyone with mental health needs. To access this Clinic, call 1 833-392-7363.

Lakeridge Health in collaboration with the long-term care facility's team and the Canadian Armed Forces continue to make progress in resolving the outbreak at Orchard Villa. Staffing levels continue to be stable and infection control best practices are in place, with everyone working at the home using PPE according to public health guidelines. Lakeridge Health is now supporting 16 long-term care homes in Durham with infection control practices and other expertise.

As we celebrate National Nursing Week, May 11-17 and Personal Support Worker (PSW) Day, May 19, we want to recognize these invaluable team members for the unique skills and patient-centred approach they bring to patients, residents and families every day.

Over this long weekend, take a moment to help community members who need some extra support. And, please take care of yourself and your loved ones. If you are concerned about your symptoms, please call your physician and complete the COVID-19 online assessment form at www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca.

Thank you again for doing your part to keep our community and health care team safe.

Wishing you good health,

Susan deRyk
Interim President and CEO

Dr. Tony Stone
Chief of Staff