



**Lakeridge
Health**

May 8, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

Durham Region continues to make steady progress in the fight against COVID-19, with fewer confirmed cases of the virus every day within the general public. This great news must be balanced with the devastating outbreaks in some long-term care and other congregate living settings. Ongoing and unwavering vigilance is required to continue to dampen down the spread within the community, and support people living in long-term care and retirement homes.



A new Phase in Ontario's COVID-19 Plan

This week there were two important developments in Ontario's response to COVID-19.

On May 6, the Ontario Government extended the state of emergency until after the Victoria Day weekend. This means current emergency orders remain in place including limiting public and social gatherings to no more than five people in order to ensure physical (social) distancing.

Also, this week, the provincial government took the first step to gradually reopening the economy. Garden centres were allowed to open earlier in the week and "non-essential" retail stores with street entrances will be allowed to reopen on May 11.

To support a successful phased reopening, we need to continue the strategies we started in mid-March to contain the spread.

These include staying home with your immediate family as much as possible, connecting with your social network virtually, and being diligent about physical distancing when you go out. Wearing a non-medical mask or homemade cloth mask in public is an additional measure you can take to protect yourself and others when physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as on public transit or in small grocery stores. And, it is important to be aware that masks are not a replacement for handwashing and physical distancing, and are just an additional tool to prevent COVID-19.

This spring, as physicians, nurses, and others on the frontline of care celebrate national recognition days and weeks, let's show our gratitude by doing our part to stop the spread of this devastating virus.

Nurses at the Forefront of the COVID-19 Fight

Next week we mark Nursing Week with the theme *Nurses: A Voice to Lead – Nursing the World to Health*. At the bedside, in the community, and at decision-making tables, nurses help address

humanity's greatest challenges. Nurses, along with many health care colleagues, are at the forefront of our response to COVID-19.

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to the more than 2,500 nurses at Lakeridge Health who deliver safe, quality care and support our health system to improve through better and more effective team-based approaches to serve people within our community.

Services for Patients and our Community

In step with the provincial government's plan, Lakeridge Health is actively planning to ramp up non-emergent surgeries and other services once it is safe to do so. It is expected that the ramp up will take a number of weeks and scheduling of surgeries will be managed in a thoughtful way, however we know it will be some time until we are back to pre-COVID-19 service levels. If you have questions about your surgery check with the referring clinic and visit Lakeridge Health's website for more information.

We have also expanded virtual services to support patients including implementing a virtual ward to monitor COVID-19 positive patients at home, supporting virtual visits for oncology and other patients and a soon-to-be launched virtual Mental Health and Addictions Clinic.

Lakeridge Health continues to lead the response to the outbreak at Orchard Villa in Pickering, in close collaboration with the long term care facility's team and the Canadian Armed Forces. Our primary focus is ensuring that the residents receive the care and support they need and eradicating the outbreak. Part of our work is to ensure everyone is using proper infection prevention and control practices, using personal protective equipment safely and ensuring education and training on best practices in outbreak management.

We are pleased to report that staffing levels have been stabilized and all identified designated family contacts (e.g., Power of Attorney or Substitute Decision-Maker), who are unable to visit, have been contacted by Lakeridge Health's Patient Experience team, with everyone contacted receiving an individualized update about their loved one.

Learn more by visiting the Orchard Villa outbreak response page on Lakeridge Health's website.

Two important ways to Help

Contact COVID19GIVING@lh.ca to donate equipment, services or items that support team wellness.

Please make a financial donation to the *Durham Fights COVID-19* campaign - www.durhamfightscovid19.ca . Your donation can be directed to your local hospital for resources to improve the patient experience, medical equipment and care items for our teams.

Thank You for doing all you can to keep our community healthy. Be safe!

Wishing you good health,

Susan deRyk
Interim President and CEO

Dr. Tony Stone
Chief of Staff