October 13, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

It has been awhile since we shared an update on Lakeridge Health's efforts to respond to COVID-19.

After a relatively stable summer and early fall, rates of COVID-19 are increasing in Durham Region and across Ontario. We are also starting to see a rise in hospitalized COVID-19 patients here at Lakeridge Health.

These increasing transmission rates are concerning and pose a threat to our health system, our economy and us personally. They are a call-to-action for all of us to double down on the basics – physically distance outside of our family circle, wear masks and frequently wash our hands.

These basic safety practices have proved to be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19, keeping ourselves, family, friends and co-workers safe. To slow down and reverse the increasing community caseloads, it is important to refocus our collective efforts.

Visiting Lakeridge Health

To ensure we keep patients and our team safe, we continue to screen everyone entering our hospitals for COVID-19 symptoms or exposures. **It is important to remember that everyone entering a Lakeridge Health facility must be masked.**

Lakeridge Health Services

After significant reductions in some services during the first wave of the pandemic in the spring and summer, we have carefully started to ramp up our services across our hospital locations as fast as it is safe to do so. This includes surgeries and ambulatory services.

As we plan for Wave 2, we are also developing a plan to enable ramp down or decrease some activities, should it be required due to a significant surge in patient

cases within the hospital. For more information about surgery and our COVID-19 related protocols, visit this link.

Regional Response

In September, schools welcomed back students following new provincial guidelines to help students safely return to a learning environment through a combination of in-class and remote learning. Lakeridge Health and our partners across the region are supporting the Durham Region Health Department who is leading the response to localized flare ups of COVID-19 in Durham schools.

COVID-19 Testing

Over the past few weeks, the demand for COVID-19 testing across the province has dramatically increased, including in Durham Region. Throughout the summer months about 300 to 400 people requested testing on a daily basis. Last week, the daily requests for testing peaked at 2,300 per day.

With the increase in demand, new provincial testing guidelines that prioritize tests for high-risk individuals have been implemented at COVID-19 assessment centres across Ontario.

People eligible for a COVID-19 test must have one of the following:

- Symptoms of COVID-19. Visit this link for COVID-19 related symptoms;
- Received public health or COVID-19 Alert APP notification of exposure. (Please download the App at Ontario.ca/covidalert (if you have not done so already);
- Work or live in a place where an outbreak has occurred, and received public health direction to be tested;
- Work or reside in a long-term care facility, retirement home, shelter, group home or other congregate care/shared living setting;
- Are part of a group targeted for testing by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Long-Term Care or by public health.

For more information on your eligibility for a test, please visit Lakeridge Heath's COVID-19 information page.

How to get an appointment for a test and/or an assessment

To get a test and, if needed, an assessment, go to covidswab.lh.ca to complete the online form. Instructions for your appointment will be automatically emailed to you. If you do not have a computer or Wi-Fi, contact DRHD for assistance at 1-800-841-2729.

Your appointment will be booked at one of the COVID-19 Assessment Centres across Durham. Anyone who has severe symptoms should go to one of our emergency departments or call 911.

It is important if you have booked an appointment for a test you no longer require, to cancel your appointment so we can reassign it to someone else at risk.

Testing at Pharmacies

Some pharmacies now offer COVID-19 testing for people without symptoms who need a COVID-19 test. Visit Ontario.ca/covidtest for information on eligibility for testing, on how to book a test and to find a pharmacy location near you.

Test Results

Individuals typically receive results from their test in 3-5 days. However, the wait time can vary and may take longer. If you are unable to find your results through Ontario.ca after this period of time, you can call the COVID Assessment Centre results line at 905- 721-4842. As there has been a significant increase in calls, please be patient. To help stop the spread of the virus while waiting for test results, it is extremely important to follow all self isolation guidelines outlined by Public Health.

We are committed to keeping our community updated as we continue to fight this global pandemic. Please continue to check Lakeridge Health's COVID-19 information page as we continue to share new guidelines and updates as they are received.

Thank you for your unwavering support and compassion as we navigate this uncharted territory together.

Please stay safe and well,

Susan deRyk   Dr. Tony Stone

Interim President and CEO   Chief of Staff