



**Lakeridge
Health**

May 1, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbours of Durham Region,

Over the past two months as the COVID-19 pandemic has gripped our community and the world, the Durham community's support and resolve to combat this virus have been second to none.

Evidence shows that our sacrifices are paying off.

In Durham Region, the curve has been flattening. In fact, we are now seeing fewer new cases every day.

One System.
Best Health.

Lakeridge
Health



While this is positive news, we are, at the same time, witnessing a high number of outbreaks in long-term care and retirement homes. Our attention at present is rightfully focused on protecting and caring for those who are most susceptible to COVID-19.

As we continually learn more about this virus, we are rapidly adjusting our response to stay ahead of the curve.

Supporting residents in long-term care and retirement homes

Over the last few weeks, Lakeridge Health has further extended its expertise into the community to support long-term care facilities and retirement homes across the region. Our SWAT team of nurses, infectious disease specialists and physicians have assisted more than a dozen homes so far. In addition, members of our team have volunteered to work in long-term care facilities facing staffing shortages to provide care and support to residents.

On April 22, Lakeridge Health took a leadership role in managing the COVID-19 outbreak at Orchard Villa in Pickering. Under the leadership of Leslie Motz, VP Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Executive, a small contingent of Lakeridge Health team members along with medical experts have been working with Orchard Villa staff and specialized Canadian Armed Forces' teams to resolve the outbreak and increase care for residents.

We have made significant progress to investigate causes of the outbreak and start to manage it. This includes testing all residents and staff and retesting some residents, deep cleaning every part of the facility, providing individualized care for each resident and supporting team members to vigilantly practice infection prevention and control. Lakeridge Health's Patient Experience team has connected with family members identified as the key contact for every resident to provide personal updates about their loved one. As well, a number of new communications channels are being offered, including scheduled 'virtual visits' to ensure families are connected, even when they cannot visit in person.

Caring for patients in our hospitals

With the outbreaks in long-term care and retirement homes, Lakeridge Health is experiencing an increase in hospital admissions for COVID-19. Our hospitals are well prepared with a “surge plan” which allows us to quickly ensure that the space, health professionals and equipment are available to provide safe and excellent care for everyone in our hospitals.

To date, 78 COVID-19 patients have been discharged home to recover following the outstanding care provided by our hospital teams.

Restrictions on visitors remain in place until COVID-19 is controlled in all areas of our community. Creating a positive experience for patients is very important to us. So far, the *Virtual Connections* program has connected 382 patients with hundreds of families and friends virtually through an iPad.

As we work together for patients and our community, we would like to mark national **Doctors’ Day** by thanking the 700 physicians of Lakeridge Health – their unwavering commitment to patients and families has never been more evident than during this unprecedented time.

Keeping up the Fight

Even as the weather gets warmer, and the government considers plans to slowly open the economy, we must not let our guard down. We must all continue to practice physical distancing, wash our hands and take all precautions that are keeping everyone safe.

If you think you have COVID-19 symptoms, please call your physician and complete the COVID-19 online assessment form at www.lakeridgehealth.on.ca.

Finally, look for ways to help those in need – check in on your neighbours or volunteer to help those who are vulnerable. There are many safe ways to help the fight against COVID-19.

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