

Kim Delahunt, President & CEO Headwaters Health Care Centre

An update on the COVID-19 Burden at Headwaters Health Care Centre

Almost a year ago to the day, we asked staff and physicians to work in long term care in our region. Many stepped up, and we were extremely grateful. There is no doubt their involvement helped abate that outbreak and save lives. This time, the request is to support the teams in our own hospital to help work in different capacities as part of the provincial COVID pandemic response. We are grateful to have staff and physicians, some of whom are from our community, step up to support these efforts in what has been over a year of professional and personal challenge.

We have been called upon to do more to support the COVID burden on hospitals experiencing high demand that is exceeding acute care capacity caused by new COVID cases. The situation has become dire. Some hospitals have run out of space and are treating patients in waiting rooms, meeting spaces and cafeterias. We are fortunate not to be experiencing this at Headwaters, but the possibility does exist. We understand physicians are working in redeployed nurse extender roles, where appropriate, to support their local hospital as well.

There is no doubt, these are very difficult and challenging times. These requests of hospital staff are occurring across all hospitals in Ontario. We know that locally, our team at Headwaters will continue to do whatever we can to support our local patients and our broader Ontario health care system.

This week we accepted five of an expected seven COVID recovering patients from other hospitals. This is the highest transfer of patients we've received yet. We opened more beds this week in traditional care spaces to accommodate this need, which is in addition to opening 13 extra beds earlier on in the pandemic. Non-clinical departments are also doing more to support these pressures, including our food services and environmental services teams.

We have created capacity in our hospital in the event we need to accept an even higher number of patients. We are following provincial direction to stop elective or non-urgent surgeries to release space and the people within our hospital to manage a surge in the system. It's some of those staff who are now working in new roles, to support our current challenges. Locally, we are seeing an increase in the number of admitted COVID-19 patients. As of today, we have eight COVID-19 positive patients, with two needing care in our Intensive Care Unit. We have transferred out patients who required a higher level of critical care. The situation is becoming much more serious across Ontario.

Our COVID-19 Assessment Centre, which is open seven days a week from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, is now seeing over 330 people a day. Dufferin County Paramedics have increased their staffing and are also supporting provincial patient transfers.

We acknowledge that fatigue is prevalent – within our hospital and in the community. We need to rally together and support each other through some challenging days in the near future. We will continue to draw upon our values of courage, kindness, passion and teamwork to ensure that we are One Community, Caring Together and meeting the needs of those who need us. We are planning and working together, thoughtfully, and with the collaboration that we all know is a hallmark in Dufferin County-Caledon.

Please know, our Emergency Department is open 24/7. Emergency and urgent surgeries such as cancer care will continue. We are also continuing our dialysis, chemotherapy and transfusion services. If you require our services and care, we are here for you.

We will continue to do our part to keep our community safe and I hope you will do yours. This includes:

- Please register to get vaccinated when you do qualify. More and more opportunities are available at vaccination clinics locally as well as in pharmacies. Continue to follow public health guidelines, even after you are vaccinated.
- Take appropriate precautions and get tested if you experience any symptoms of COVID-19.

Please continue to stay safe, take care of one another and know that Headwaters is here for you if you need us. Thank you all.