

## LAKE OF THE WOODS DISTRICT HOSPITAL

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On behalf of myself and the entire team at Lake of the Woods District Hospital I wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to you and your families in these challenging and sometime confusing times of COVID-19. Over the past few months, all of our lives have been turned upside down, and your hospital at the lake is no exception. Earlier this year as our team focused on the challenges of preparing for a forecasted surge far beyond what anyone would have believed we could handle, a number of political leaders from our community provided the media with messaging that discouraged our summer residents from coming to Kenora during the pandemic. Unfortunately, the unintended perception of this messaging was that we did not value our summer residents. I can assure you that we truly value you as part of the community we serve and recognize how important coming to the lake is to you and your family.

So why the messaging about not coming? I would like to share with you what was happening in the hospital when this messaging first went out. From mid-March to late April we were in the midst of intense pandemic planning. We were told by the Province of Ontario to expect an overwhelming surge of COVID-19 patients and the data being used by the Province at that time indicated we could face an increase of up to 40 additional medical patients a day, plus up to three times the number of Intensive Care Unit patients than we have beds to accommodate. Over and above that, the Emergency Department had just been informed that the locum physicians they were expecting to help staff the Emergency Department in the summer would not be coming because they were needed in their home communities due to COVID outbreaks, or they were concerned they would need to isolate for 14 days when they returned to their home communities if they did come to Kenora.

In order to create capacity, the hospital negotiated an arrangement with Pinecrest Home for the Aged to move up to 12 hospital patients to their facility, freeing up much needed space in the hospital. We negotiated a second agreement with the Seven Generations Educational Institute to move up to 30 patients to their campus in the event we were overwhelmed with a surge of COVID-19 patients. Lastly, in conjunction with the Kenora District Services Board we leased the Keewatin Memorial Hockey Arena in Kenora and converted it into a COVID-19 Isolation Centre for vulnerable people in the Kenora area, particularly the homeless population, who were and are very vulnerable to becoming infected.

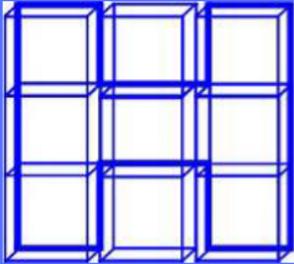
Over and above the contingency planning to increase capacity, we also implemented a number of other measures to restrict access to the hospital, including restricting the scope of services to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread within the hospital, or from the hospital to the community. I have attached a milestone chart showing some of the key strategic moments of the last few months. I truly hope that this helps provide some context to the comments made by local and provincial leaders in their earlier messaging.

We are thrilled to welcome you back to the Kenora Region and wish you and your families a safe and enjoyable summer. We look forward to sharing some of the planning ideas for the new hospital with you that we have worked on over the winter and look forward to your feedback.

Respectfully,

Ray Racette  
President and CEO

# COVID-19



LAKE OF THE WOODS  
DISTRICT HOSPITAL

## MARCH 12, 2020

- On-site testing for COVID-19 has commenced
- LWDH has enacted its Pandemic Plan.
- Daily Pandemic huddles scheduled.

## MARCH 13, 2020

- Interim Assessment Centre for testing opened.
- Visitor restrictions put in-place. Visitor screening implemented.
- Staff isolation mandatory for staff returning from international travel. Staff advised to not travel during March Break; compensation not provided for quarantine or travel complications.

## MARCH 15, 2020

- LWDH cancelled elective and non-essential surgeries.
- No visitors permitted in the ED, with the exception of parents/guardians of minor children.

## MARCH 16, 2020

- Staff not permitted to travel for work, conferences, and/or meetings.

## MARCH 17, 2020

- If staff have traveled anywhere outside of Canada and returned on or after March 13, 2020, they must self-isolate for a period of 14 days upon return.
- Visitor restrictions expanded; limited exceptions include end of life, critical care, labour and delivery, paediatric, as well as other extenuating circumstances.
- Restrictions now include volunteers, and learners (unless in their final year and it's required for graduation).
- Hostel closed to further admissions.

## MARCH 18, 2020

- Staff screening commenced at 06:30 hrs., and includes a temperature check.
- Patient care and housekeeping staff instructed to change on-site prior to and after their shift.

## MARCH 19, 2020

- Cafeteria no longer accepts cash payments; debit/credit only.

## MARCH 20, 2020

- Focus on mask fit testing staff who are expired and working in high-risk areas.

## MARCH 23, 2020

- Government issued order under Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) to enable hospital to redeploy staff.

## MARCH 24, 2020

- Staff FAQ circulated regarding work restrictions, PPE usage, and environmental cleaning.
- COVID-19 testing results now issued by Public Health.

## MARCH 26, 2020

- Patient care, including professional staff, and enviro services staff were instructed to wear hospital scrubs for their shift. LWDH will launder the scrubs.

## MARCH 30, 2020

- New COVID-19 Assessment Centre for testing opened at the old Ambulance Garage. ANHP join forces to staff the Assessment Centre.

## APRIL 1, 2020

- Staff screening relocated to the Main Lobby.

## **APRIL 2, 2020**

- LWDH enters Phase 4 of the Pandemic Plan (community spread of COVID-19).

## **APRIL 3, 2020**

- LWDH launched an electronic screening tool for staff to enter the hospital.

## **APRIL 4, 2020**

- Executive Team and HR issue a notice to all staff that for April to June inclusive, all pending vacation requests will not be approved and all pre-approved vacation/leaves of absence will be cancelled. Only medical appointments and other extenuating circumstances will be the exceptions.

## **APRIL 7, 2020**

- LWDH implemented a procedural/surgical mask conservation plan.
- LWDH called for volunteers to sew masks that will be provided to patients presenting to the hospital in an effort to conserve PPE for healthcare providers.
- LWDH implemented a daily casual dress code for office staff until further notice. This was to allow staff to properly launder their clothes on a daily basis to reduce the risk of an exposure.

## **APRIL 8, 2020**

- ANHP announced a temporary COVID-19 Emergency Centre at the Keewatin Memorial Area for the vulnerable population, which included:
  1. People who are showing COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting for testing.
  2. People waiting for COVID-19 test results.
  3. People who have tested positive for COVID-19 who do not require hospital care and need a safe and supportive place to be quarantined.

## **APRIL 9, 2020**

- ANHP COVID-19 Assessment Centre expanded service to include mobile testing to Kenora and regional First Nations communities.
- LWDH issued a media release requesting summer residents to respect stay at home practices over the Easter weekend.

## **APRIL 15, 2020**

- LWDH opened Transitional Care Unit at Pinecrest Home for the Aged; eight (8) ALC patients were transferred.

## **APRIL 17, 2020**

- NWHU confirmed the first COVID-19 case in the Kenora area at 2:30 p.m., which was acquired from out of province travel. Risk to others is identified as low.

## **APRIL 22, 2020**

- COVID-19 Update was presented to all staff via Grand Rounds by all Pandemic Team Leads
- NWHU announced the second positive COVID-19 case in Kenora area at 10:00 a.m., which was a close contact of the other positive case.

## **MAY 1, 2020**

- The COVID-19 Isolation Centre at the Keewatin Memorial Arena opens.

## **MAY 4, 2020**

- A new PCR analyzer has arrived on-site and the Laboratory is investigating new protocols for COVID-19 testing.

## **MAY 7, 2020**

- Executive Pandemic Team started discussing a recovery plan to determine the timing and phasing of resuming services throughout the hospital.

## **MAY 15, 2020**

- Virtual care launched at LWDH; using REACTS and iPads.

## **MAY 20, 2020**

- HR launched a staff survey to gather information regarding LWDH's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **MAY 22, 2020**

- HR called for an expression of interest to support long-term care homes if needed.

## **MAY 27, 2020**

- ANHP media release announced expanding COVID-19 testing at the Assessment Centre. Will test every individual who is symptomatic or who is concerned they have been exposed to COVID-19.

## **MAY 29, 2020**

- LWDH started encouraging patients and visitors to bring their own cloth masks to wear in hospital.

## **JUNE 2, 2020**

- There are two teams working on the recovery plan for the resumption of services within the hospital. One team is planning for the resumption of ambulatory services and another team that is working on the resumption of surgical services. Organizational risk assessments are being completed and Ontario Health directives are being followed.

## **JUNE 5, 2020**

- LWDH notified of a positive COVID-19 case that was treated in the ED. All staff involved in the patient's care were followed up with. Staff reminded to be vigilant with PPE practices and hand hygiene.
- LWDH submitted the Operational Readiness Checklist for Surgical Services to Ontario Health - North Region; pending approval.

## **JUNE 8, 2020**

- LWDH notified of a two (2) additional positive COVID-19 cases over the weekend at the Kenora Jail; outbreak declared.
- Assessment Centre and Laboratory experiencing a high increase in testing. Team effort underway to ensure enough swabs are on-site.
- Mobile testing underway in the communities.
- LWDH resumed outpatient care services.

## **JUNE 10, 2020**

- LWDH notified of a two (2) additional positive COVID-19 cases in the community; no further details made available.