

Media Release

January 7, 2021
For Immediate Release

WRH THANKS REGIONAL HOSPITAL PARTNERS FOR SUPPORT AMID BED CAPACITY CONCERNS

WINDSOR, ON. Windsor Regional Hospital is thanking our provincial partners for stepping up to assist with continued bed capacity concerns at our two acute care campuses.

As of today, more than 50 patients have been transferred to our friends at Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare (HDGH), who recently decanted two of their own units to free up space for transfers from WRH. The patients who transferred to HDGH are those who have completed their acute care treatment at WRH, but mostly require post-acute beds until they can be safely discharged back to local long-term care facilities currently facing outbreaks.

From an acute care standpoint, we have so far identified five patients appropriate for transfer to our southwestern Ontario partners at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC). These transfers to LHSC are non-critical acute care patients who require further hospital treatment and supervision.

“We appreciate the assistance of these amazing hospital sector colleagues for their cooperation in helping us as we work to ensure we can maintain safe and quality patient care,” said WRH President and CEO David Musyj.

A January 5th announcement noted plans to transfer patients to Chatham-Kent Health Alliance and Bluewater Health in Sarnia. Unfortunately, due to changes in circumstances we were unable to transfer as many patients as we had first considered to our partners in Chatham and Sarnia, though a few patients have been transferred, or are in the process of being transferred, to these locations. Please note that both Sarnia and Chatham are dealing with increased COVID-19 caseloads in their respective communities this week.

“We are all committed to continue monitor our capacity needs and ensure that as a system, we work together as partners for the safety of all our patients in each of our communities,” Musyj said.

As of Wednesday, January 6th, WRH has 62 in-patients admitted to hospital who have tested positive for COVID-19 – much higher than the peak volume of confirmed COVID-19 patients seen on any single day during the first wave last May (27 patients).

About one third of these patients require treatment in our critical care units, which have reached capacity with many non-COVID-19 patients. Internally, we have maximized our acute care bed capacity between our two campuses taking into account all these factors as part of our surge capacity and pandemic planning. However, despite these additional beds, we continue to see capacity pressures and a lack of bed space to treat patients safely with the staffing resources and physical space available.

As noted in our Tuesday, January 4th news release, hospital capacity is constrained by high volumes of COVID-19 patients because these individuals need to be isolated and therefore cannot safely share rooms with non-COVID patients in hospital. Guidance provided by Ontario Health last June called for hospitals to “maximize the number of private and semi-private rooms with dedicated washrooms, using four-bed ward rooms as semi-private rooms when possible, ensuring a two-meter distance between patient beds and the use of alternative spaces for beds in current hospital facilities.” These guidance measures are unattainable at current patient volumes given that only 29% of all inpatient beds at Met Campus and 16% of all inpatient beds at Ouellette Campus are in private rooms. Also, in the vast majority of our semi-private or ward rooms, a two meter distance between beds in our aging facilities is not possible.

As indicated in an internal assessment conducted in July, 2020 (https://www.wrh.on.ca/uploads/MEMO_OH_Recommendations_Bed_Inventory_July_23_2020.pdf), when the Ontario Health recommendations for inpatient placement are applied at WRH, our overall bed capacity is reduced by 21% (118 beds). Also, on any given day we have 150 patients in isolation or private rooms that once were semi or ward rooms. A video showing the impact COVID-19 has had on our care for our patients can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/oMRszyqyIUE>.

For more information on how WRH is working to protect the public from COVID-19, including COVID-19 Assessment Centre and visitor restrictions, please visit www.wrh.on.ca/coronavirus.

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