COVID-19 – All-staff Update #7

This morning there were three new cases of COVID-19 in Ottawa, bringing the total to 13. These numbers will continue to rise. Ottawa Public Health confirmed that it’s likely that all travel-related cases have not been caught and estimates that there could be hundreds more cases of COVID-19 in our community.

To reduce the risk of community spread, we support OPH’s request that members of our community practice greater social distancing and limit all non-essential trips out of your home. Visit OPH’s website for more information on social distancing and how to keep you and your loved ones safe.

Staff who will be going to work should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 like fever or cough. Refer to Public Health Ontario’s self-monitoring fact sheet for direction on self-monitoring. If you begin to develop symptoms, visit OPH’s website for guidance.

Secured facilities and centralized screening:
To ensure the safety of our patients and staff and limit the spread of COVID-19, TOH began implementing its secured facilities and centralized screening plan in a phased approach.

Effective today, we have asked our volunteers to not come to the hospital.

Working with our universities and colleges, we have also asked students to no longer train in hospital.

Other non-essential personnel such as contractors, vendors etc. are not permitted in the hospital unless approved for the provision of essential services.
In addition to our restricted visitor policy, as of tomorrow, Tuesday March 17, we will begin screening patients and visitors who enter the Civic, General and Riverside campuses. Patients and visitors will be directed to enter only through selected entrances with screening stations.

Staff members, including physicians and residents, may swipe their badges to enter the hospital through staff-only entrances. By using a swipe badge entrance without a screening station, you are agreeing to self-monitor for fever or cough, and If you begin to develop symptoms, visit OPH’s website for guidance.

We are also encouraging staff who are not providing essential services, and can fully perform their tasks from home to work remotely. Supervisors will reach out to staff in positions where working remotely is appropriate.

**Elective surgeries and non-emergent services:**
In times of increasing clinical demand, prioritization is essential. Physicians, administrators, the Ministry, OMA and OHA are working together to ensure the health and safety of our patients and staff by carefully planning the slowdown of non-emergent services as the COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve. TOH is taking a planned approach on limiting the amount of activity in our operating rooms and clinics to preserve capacity and make sure our staff members are properly trained. Surgeries to be postponed will be selected based on clear criteria that balances the health-care needs of our patients with environmental risks.

I appreciate your understanding in receiving so many messages. I will continue to keep you informed of new developments as they occur in this rapidly changing environment. I will be sending another update later today.

*Please regularly check myHospital for up-to-date resources and FAQs on COVID-19 and a range of other topics including HR, safety and preparedness and previous all staff messages, including versions translated to French*