COVID-19 Update #23

I want to begin this All Staff message with a powerful example of how much our community appreciates all you do for them.

“THANK YOU TOH SUPERHEROES”

These are the words on a hand painted sign that now greets our staff at the General Campus. Knowing that our community is behind us means a great deal to me and I’m sure to all of you. I know this has been a very stressful and trying time for all of you and I want to thank you too. (To see the signs, please visit our Facebook page.)

This morning, Ontario Public Health reported 1,966 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ontario, with Ottawa Public health confirming 144 cases in Ottawa. There are 663 patients admitted to TOH today, 9 of whom are COVID-19 positive - 2 in intensive care and 7 in acute care.

Directive on access to and usage of Personal Protective Equipment

Yesterday evening, the Chief Medical Officer of Health released a directive to update precautions for healthcare workers interacting with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

The directive continues to reinforce our current IPAC directions that droplet and contact precautions are required for all healthcare workers interacting with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients. It also continues to reinforce that a N95 respirator must be used for aerosol generating procedures performed on these patients.

Based on a point-of-care risk assessment (PCRA) performed prior to an interaction with a patient, a health care worker may find unique circumstances that require additional personal
protective equipment (PPE), based on their professional and clinical judgement. If this occurs, proceed with the PPE required and let your leader know why it was required.

We continue to work closely with our vendors and both provincial and federal governments to acquire more PPE equipment, but I want to remind everyone that we must conserve our supply wherever possible.

**Capacity planning:**

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve locally, TOH is taking further action to ensure the health and safety of patients and staff. Working with our partner hospitals across the Champlain region we are creating a regional patient flow plan. By managing patient flow as a region, we will maintain access to emergent specialized care for patients who need it throughout the region. This means that all hospitals will be able to quickly transfer patients who require emergent specialized care to the most appropriate hospital. This will also enable transfer of patients to the most appropriate care setting if they do not require this level of care. Work is currently underway to establish a set of consistent and equitable guidelines and processes that will be applied throughout the region. I would like to thank everyone at TOH and in the region who are helping to make this a reality.

**Proper protection for clothing at work and home:**

I have received questions from many of you regarding the proper care for your work clothing. Infection prevention and control recommends that laundering your uniforms/work clothing as per usual at home, is adequate. They also recommend using the highest temperature for washing and drying that your clothing will tolerate. If you want to be extra vigilant, it is always good practice to put your uniform/work clothing on when you arrive at work and take them off before you leave.

Thank you for your continued hard work and commitment to the patients and community we serve.