COVID-19 Update #28

This morning, Ontario Public Health reported 4,347 cases of COVID-19 in the province, with Ottawa Public Health confirming 370 of those in Ottawa. There are 631 patients admitted to TOH today, 21 of whom are COVID-19 positive, with 8 in intensive care and 13 in acute care.

COVID-19 Epi-curve and Preparedness

Last Friday, the Premier of Ontario reported on various COVID-19 scenarios that could impact our province. He referred to a predictive model (epi-curve) to describe what we may see in the next weeks and months. He also spoke about the level of preparedness in the province.

Our epidemiologists and scientists have estimated the future epi-curve scenarios for Ottawa, using the same approach used by the province. These estimates show how the curve flattens, the more physical distancing we do. The message couldn’t be simpler – the better the distancing – the flatter the curve.

We will be updating you regularly on where we are on the curve and how we are prepared to meet staff and community needs, including the status of our acute bed capacity and critical care capacity, including ventilators. We are also monitoring closely our staffing levels for physicians, nurses, other healthcare professionals and support staff to ensure we are ready for surges in patient volumes. This includes having a safe working environment with sufficient PPE supplies.

It’s hard to look at this curve and not think of how it will impact each and every one of us, no matter what we do at TOH. Unfortunately, things will get harder in the coming weeks. I know that many of you are already taking extraordinary measures at home and elsewhere to protect your loved ones while still doing your job here. We continue to look for ways to help you manage through this difficult time.
Note: Physical distancing is the reduction of physical contact between people. You have a 70% reduction in physical distancing if pre-COVID-19 you had close contact with 10 people per day and you reduce your contact to 3 people per day.

A 70% physical distancing scenario means the people in Ottawa have an average 70% reduction in their person-to-person contact. Some people, such as essential workers, will not be able to reduce their contact as much as others. This means that non-essential contact needs to have a higher reduction than essential contact.

Visitor and Patient Parking

I am pleased to report that as of this morning TOH is no longer charging parking fees for patients and visitors. Our visitors are people who are visiting loved ones on compassionate grounds, usually at end of life. Our patients are those who require urgent diagnosis and care. Please leave the parking spaces marked for visitors in the parking lot so they will have easier access to the hospital.

Remember The Ottawa Hospital’s Just Culture

Over the past few years, we have introduced a “Just Culture” approach throughout TOH. The principles of a Just Culture are the following:

1. If you make a mistake even if nothing bad comes from it, report it so we can all learn from it.
2. If you see something broken, report it, so it can be fixed.
3. Be willing to coach your peers to make the right choices and be willing to be coached by them in return.

Today’s difficult work environment requires strict adherence to infection prevention and control practices to protect patients, staff and colleagues. Hand washing, physical distancing even at work, using PPE properly and self-isolating when required will help ensure the safety for all. Our Just Culture principles enable us to speak up when we feel that a colleague is not adhering to the IPAC and Public Health directives. We are all in this together.

Community appreciation

My message wouldn’t be complete without a few more signs of support from our community. Thank-you for sending these along to communications@toh.ca and please keep them coming. To see all of them, visit this link.