COVID-19 Update #29

I hope you have had a chance to look through the “community appreciation website” we’ve developed to see the many signs that are appearing all across Ottawa. We are updating them every day with the messages and photos you and our community are sending to communications@toh.ca. Today I received this lovely thank you video from a local synagogue.

This morning, Ontario Public Health reported 4,726 cases of COVID-19 in the province, with Ottawa Public Health confirming 403 of those in Ottawa. There are 652 patients admitted to TOH today, 17 of whom are COVID-19 positive, with 7 in intensive care and 10 in acute care.

Bed capacity

Yesterday, I wrote about an epi-curve that projects different scenarios for the impact of COVID-19 in Ottawa. It was clear that the better we practice physical distancing; the flatter Ottawa’s curve will be. Today, I would like to provide more context, using capacity planning for hospital beds in our region, and how the plan relates to the curve.

Bed capacity planning is essential to expand the number of acute and critical care beds so we can manage surges in COVID-19 patients and continue to provide urgent specialty care for non-COVID patients. The bed plan includes a Command Centre to ensure coordinated movement of patients across the region, so they will receive quality care in the most appropriate hospital setting.

The Ottawa Hospital has 1100 acute care beds and 65 critical care beds as part of its mandate to serve Ottawa and the region. TOH is able to ramp up its critical care bed capacity from 65 to
approximately 185 beds. When we consider Ottawa and the region, we can ramp up our capacity to almost 3,000 acute care beds and 300 critical care beds.

Current projections indicate that we will have sufficient beds to manage the COVID-19 surges. This is contingent on maintaining the effect of physical distancing and strict adherence to public health measures. Please note that the model includes many assumptions that are subject to change as new information becomes available.

**Use of non-medical masks in public**

Many of you have asked about wearing non-medical masks in public. Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer recently stated that Canadians can use non-medical masks in tandem with social distancing measures to limit the transmission of the deadly virus when out grocery shopping or at a pharmacy. She added that "wearing a non-medical mask is an additional measure that you can take to protect others around you but warned that “a non-medical mask doesn't necessarily protect the person wearing it.”

**Tonight, at the General Campus**

This evening at 7 pm, members of our police, paramedics and fire departments will be at the General campus as a show of support from fellow frontline workers. If you are at the General at that time and can spare a moment to step out and wave, please do so. I know they will appreciate it. Do not forget to physically distance!