

// To all patients and families, please trust that we are doing everything we can to provide the best care possible for the communities we are privileged to serve. //

A MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

from our Chief of Staff and the Chief Executive Officer

There are many things we would like our community to know about restarting scheduled and elective procedures and other patient care programs at West Parry Sound Health Centre.

We recognize that our reduced delivery of care has caused pain, discomfort, and worry for many patients and families. We are sympathetic to the needs of our community. Limiting our services and programs at WPSHC was in response to a provincial requirement directed at all hospitals in Ontario. This requirement was described in COVID-19 Provincial Directive #2, issued very early in the pandemic.

We have never stopped providing urgent and necessary care, but we also recognize that many patients have had their care delayed and indefinitely postponed. We want our community to know that all hospitals are facing significant barriers. At WPSHC, we are doing everything we can to move closer to delivering the Patient and Family Centred Care that our community benefited from prior to the arrival of COVID-19.

As a first step, the provincial government has now changed the conditions described in [Directive #2](#). In itself, this does not allow your community hospital to resume 'business as usual.' It signals that we can begin to finalize a thoughtful plan to gradually ramp-up our services and programs. Every hospital in Ontario is required to have a facility-specific 'service resumption plan' approved by regional authorities. There are 127 acute care hospitals in Ontario; every plan will be required to align with provincial and regional services. This recognizes that our health care system across the full continuum of care is a complicated network of different patient pathways, specialties, sub-specialties, and unique local capabilities. Our delivery of care in West Parry Sound is directly linked with our larger partner hospitals providing specialized care in cancer, cardiac, serious trauma, and advanced surgeries.

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Prior to COVID-19 this intricate system was working, though imperfectly, with a high degree of coordination. That equilibrium will be difficult to re-establish; and however we define this 'new normal,' for better and worse, it will never look like the system we have left behind. The constraints imposed by scarcity, contagion, and the need for heightened protection are not going away.

Here at WPSHC we must meet the same base-level conditions that will be required at all hospitals in Ontario. That includes: the full complement of staff, physicians, and supporting departments that work cooperatively to deliver safe, quality care; a long-range and dependable supply of personal protective equipment, medications, and the tools and devices that make care possible; the space and resources needed to care for both urgent and scheduled patients while also reserving capacity to successfully care for patients who might come in the current, or next wave of COVID-19. All hospitals will meet these challenges with differing levels of success. In every community across the province, hospital services will resume in kind with uniquely different patterns of care.

If we could, we would: flip a switch that returns us to normal. We need our community to know that it will not be that simple.

We are confidently seeking the cooperation of our provincial and regional health care partners, strongly advocating for solutions that resolve global system scarcities, and working collaboratively to overcome the local challenges that are not insurmountable. The problem is complex, it is without precedent, and it involves numerous people and organizations who all share common interest in the thoughtful and timely resumption of full patient services.

As scheduled and elective procedures and patient care programs restart in our community, more information, when available, will be provided to patients who have had care rescheduled or delayed. If your symptoms have changed significantly, please reach out to the clinic involved in your care.

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Chief of Staff, Dr. Terence Fargher

CEO, Donald Sanderson