Waypoint COVID-19 Community and Partner Update

January 26, 2021

COVID-19 is a cause of worry for all of us and Waypoint is closely monitoring the situation and taking action to ensure the safety of its patients and our community.

On Friday, January 22, 2021, in consultation with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Waypoint declared a COVID-19 outbreak on the Horizon Program for Geriatric Psychiatry. We now have confirmation that preliminary test results of one of the individuals in the current outbreak was positive for a particular mutation indicating a high probability that this individual has a variant strain of concern of COVID-19. Additional testing underway will determine the exact COVID-19 variant.

“We know this news is difficult to hear however extra precautions have been in place on the Horizon Program since January 18th with all patients in isolation and full contact/droplet personal protective equipment for staff,” says Carol Lambie, Waypoint President and CEO. “To date, this outbreak has been well contained and we thank our staff for their tireless efforts to care for patients under the heightened safety precautions in place for this program.”

The outbreak is contained at this time to two patients and one staff. All patients were tested and the first set of results have come back negative and patients were tested again today. Staff from Horizon and across Waypoint have also been participating in testing with no additional staff cases reported. All Horizon patients and many of the staff have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. While the specific variant has not been defined, Pfizer-BioNTech reported last week that the vaccine appears to work just as well against a fast-spreading variant of the coronavirus first identified in the UK.

Enhanced cleaning is in place and the program is closed to admissions and discharges, and all visiting and non-essential activities have been cancelled. Staff are being cohorted on the Horizon Program and not moving to other areas of the hospital. It’s important to note that the Horizon Program is located in the Bayfield Building which is not connected to the rest of the Waypoint campus. All staff are screened at entry to the Bayfield Building and do not use the general entrance/screening for Waypoint’s other buildings.

“Again, we know how challenging this is,” says Lambie. “Our recent outbreaks, positive cases among patients and staff, and the additional safety measures of isolation of patients and full PPE is taking its toll on our staff, patients and families, and this additional news adds more anxiety. We want to assure you that any additional safety measures recommended for the variant are being put in place, we are keeping our families up to date and offering support, and we have numerous wellness supports available for staff.”

The outbreak remains contained on the Horizon Program in the Bayfield building only. The Awenda Program outbreak was declared over on Saturday and Awenda and all other clinical programs are continuing to operate with the hospital still open to admissions to our isolation unit. Universal masking of staff and patients, and multiple safety measures are in place across the hospital. We also are limiting movement of staff to single units, and programs as much as possible. Patients also are contained within their programs and there is no crossover with other patients.
Waypoint remains focused on infection prevention and control measures, and the safety of patients, clients, staff and our community and is in regular contact with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. All safety precautions remain in place for all patients and staff in all of our locations. Everyone must be screened, practice thorough hand hygiene and physical distancing and use full PPE for all close interactions and if working on isolation units.