Waypoint COVID-19 Community and Partner Update
January 5, 2021

Happy New Year. As we move forward into 2021, we are excited for the promise the COVID-19 vaccine brings. Over the last week, availability of the vaccine for hospital staff has significantly increased and we are excited and pleased that more than half of our staff either have received the vaccine, or have an appointment scheduled. It is expected that in the several weeks, any employee who wishes to receive the vaccine will have the opportunity.

This is wonderful news and cause for hope, as we entered the new year with notice of a positive employee case on January 1, 2021, and another on January 4, 2021. Both cases are considered to be acquired in the community and not at the hospital. As the exposure for both is low risk based on our safety measures and stringent adherence by the staff, there is no need to test staff or patients, or for anyone to be self-isolating. In consultation with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, we are not considered to be in outbreak status.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, we have had zero patient cases and just six staff cases. At this time, we do not have confirmed timing for when our patients and clients will be able to access the vaccine, but we continue to advocate for inclusion as soon as possible.

Like all other hospitals in our region, we continue to operate in Phase 1 of visiting protocols. Since December 9, 2020, all in-person visits have been cancelled with the exception of visits for vulnerable patients. Our team has been working diligently to increase access to virtual visits with additional iPads and devices on the programs, with more iPads expected in January.

As case numbers increase across the province, and hospitals face outbreaks and high occupancy with ICU capacity as high as 115%, Ontario Health requested all hospitals be prepared to operationalize surge plans within 48 hours of notice. Our plan to support the health care system includes an increase in inpatient beds. We are very appreciative of the staff being trained in isolation procedures this week to support these needs, and for any staff who will be needed in the future.

This move has required us to delay the resumption of the Georgianwood concurrent disorders inpatient beds until the concern for hospital capacity of the current high positive case numbers and post-holiday season are understood. While we are disappointed in this delay, it is necessary to meet the demand of the entire health care system. We will be regularly reassessing this to be able to resume these services as well as the resumption of our Forensic Assessment Program Unit B as soon as possible.

Our hospital remains focused on infection prevention and control, and the safety of patients, clients, staff and our community. We continue to be in regular contact with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and will make any additional adjustments as required. All safety precautions remain in place – universal masking for patients and staff, screening, hand hygiene, use of full PPE in our isolation unit and for any symptomatic patients, physical distancing, etc.

We wish to publicly thank our Waypoint team for the effort they made to make the holiday season special for our patients these last two weeks, despite the challenges of the pandemic.