

A Message from the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Norfolk Brant Burlington Hospital Presidents and CEOs

Hospitals working together to deliver care during pandemic

September 15, 2020

Hospitals in Hamilton, Niagara, Haldimand, Norfolk, Brant and Burlington (HNHNBB region) are working together to ensure ongoing stability of the health care system throughout the pandemic and particularly during times when there may be a surge and increase in cases of COVID-19.

Our region's hospitals are developing a coordinated, evidence-based, and equitable approach to caring for COVID-19-positive patients requiring hospital care in the HNHNBB region. The goal of the Regional COVID-19 Model of Care Strategy is to accommodate fluctuations and a potential second wave of COVID-19, resulting in increased demand for COVID-19 care while minimizing any potential disruption of scheduled, regional, and community care across the region.

All hospital emergency departments in the region will support and provide care for persons under investigation for COVID-19. Patients who do not require hospitalization will be discharged and receive follow-up care as determined by their care team.

Patients who test positive and require hospitalization will be cared for at one of four designated hospitals providing consolidated acute COVID-19 care:

- Hamilton Health Sciences (Hamilton General Hospital)
- Joseph Brant Hospital
- Niagara Health (St. Catharines Site)
- St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton

Norfolk General Hospital and Brant Community Healthcare System will continue to provide local COVID-19 care, and may transfer COVID-19 positive patients as needed to designated hospitals.

As part of the strategy, Joseph Brant Hospital's Pandemic Response Unit (PRU) will be a regional resource to provide care for COVID-19 patients, should the need arise. The Pandemic Response Unit is an external all-season field hospital structure at Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington. It is designed specifically to care for stable COVID-19 positive patients who have mild to moderate symptoms and require care and support that cannot be provided at home. For example, they may require oxygen therapy and medication, as well as ongoing monitoring of their symptoms and some personal support.



As admitted patients who are transferred to another hospital recover from COVID, they will either be discharged home with community supports as needed, or they will be transferred back to their community hospital for ongoing care as soon as possible. Although some patients may not be cared for in their community hospital, support for virtual visits and engagement of family/caregivers will be provided.

“It is our hope that transmission rates in our region remain low, fluctuations will be managed with current hospital capacity, and that the regional strategy will not need to be activated,” says Rob MacIsaac, President and CEO, Hamilton Health Sciences, and Chair, Regional CEO Committee for Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Norfolk Brant Burlington. “However, creating this type of approach is critical to our pandemic response plans and to ensure that we are prepared for any potential surge in COVID cases.”

“This collaboration demonstrates the strong partnerships among our hospitals and will serve as a foundation to address possible future health care crises in our region,” says Rob MacIsaac. “As always, the safety of patients, staff and physicians is our main priority.”

“Our Pandemic Response Unit was built to prepare for the expected surge of COVID-19 patients. Fortunately, we have been able to successfully treat all COVID-19 cases without the need to expand care to the PRU,” says Eric Vandewall, President and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital.

“We know that COVID-19 remains an ongoing threat, and as we move into the next phase of COVID planning, we stand at the ready with a state-of-the-art temporary field hospital structure that will serve as a regional resource to care to COVID-19 patients should the need arise.”

Moving forward, hospital leaders will continue to refine the plan, working with EMS and other partners and in coordination with Ontario Health (West Region).

Information for the public:

- Contact public health for information about COVID-19, including assessment centre locations and hours.
- **Anyone experiencing serious symptoms should call 9-1-1 or go to their nearest emergency department.**
- Continue to protect yourself and others by following public health advice including washing your hands frequently, wearing a mask when appropriate and getting a flu shot when available.

For media inquiries, please contact:

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Joseph Brant Hospital’s Pandemic Response Unit: <https://youtu.be/VJTFS2Vfugs>

Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Norfolk Brant Burlington Hospital Presidents and CEOs:

Dr. David McNeil, President & CEO, Brant Community Healthcare System

Sharon Moore, Interim President & CEO, Haldimand War Memorial Hospital

Rob MacIsaac, President & CEO, Hamilton Health Sciences

Lynne Pay, CEO, Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre

Eric Vandewall, President & CEO, Joseph Brant Hospital

Lynn Guerriero, President, Niagara Health

Lucy Bonanno, President & CEO, Norfolk General Hospital and West Haldimand General Hospital

Melissa Farrell, President, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton