

A Message to Our Community

Despite the major expansion of our hospital, wait times for emergency and other services at York Central Hospital will likely increase in the coming months. We'd like to tell you why. . .

We are facing extraordinary financial and growth pressures

As we all know, we're living through extraordinary economic times. The provincial government, from which hospitals receive their funding, is forecasting an unprecedented deficit of \$24.7 billion this fiscal year. In the health sector, our hospital, and other hospitals across the province, is assuming a 0% funding increase. This means there will be no increase in funding to cover any deficit we incurred this year.

Southwest York Region is an area where demand for health services is among the highest in the country. Despite our recent hospital expansion, funding is not keeping pace with the extreme growth in our community.

As a result, York Central Hospital is experiencing significant financial challenges. Our deficit for the year to date now stands at \$12.5 million – and will continue to grow unless we act now.

Finding ways to live within our means

Knowing that Ontario taxpayers are also feeling the effects of the recession, the government and hospitals alike are committed to doing our part by finding ways to live within our means.

We have had clear direction through our accountability agreement with our Local Health Integration Network and our hospital's Board of Trustees to balance our budget. Carrying a deficit is not an option.

We also know that we are not alone in these challenges and that other York Region and GTA hospitals are facing similar challenges. Although the details vary from hospital to hospital, we must all do our part to be as fiscally responsible as possible while doing everything we can to maintain quality patient care.

Step one - reducing spending while minimizing the impact on patient care

To balance our books, we introduced a wide range of cost reduction measures. Among a long list of cost control measures we: implemented a hiring freeze on all new positions and existing staff vacancies, introduced temporary holiday service closures in many outpatient clinics and services, reduced our pharmacy and drug costs, increased cost efficiencies in areas that were not meeting industry benchmarks. These and other measures continue to create savings – but not enough. We need to dig deeper.

Step two – the difficult but necessary decision to reduce services and staff

York Central Hospital always strives to be responsive to – and open with – the community we serve. That's why we are letting you know that we are closing 18

unfunded beds and laying off up to 22 of our 2,225 staff. These bed closures represent a 3% reduction of our total beds and the layoffs represent a 1% reduction of staff. Such decisions are difficult but necessary, and are being taken now to, we hope, minimize any future service reductions.

What does this mean for our patients and community?

Despite the best efforts of our doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, patients will likely experience longer waiting times in our Emergency Department and, if required, for a bed on one of our inpatient units. We may also be forced to consider further measures. Meanwhile, we are doing everything in our power to ensure patients continue to receive quality care in a safe and caring environment.

What are we doing to reduce wait times and minimize impact on patients?

- improving the timeliness of care to create smooth and seamless transitions throughout the patient's hospital experience,
- identifying patients who can be safely discharged, making beds available as soon as possible for new patients,
- working closely with our community partners to make advance arrangements for home care and other in-home therapies to promote continued recovery, and
- opening an interim long term care area where patients who are awaiting placement in a nursing home can be cared for appropriately, freeing up beds for more critically ill patients.

Our doctors, nurses and health care teams will continue to do their very best

Every year we receive hundreds of letters, cards, e-mails and notes of appreciation from patients and their families and we are grateful for that continued support. As we move forward with these difficult but necessary measures, we ask for your patience and understanding as our staff and doctors do their very best to provide quality patient care within our funding resources.

York Central Hospital is extremely fortunate to have one of the most skilled and dedicated health care teams in the province. We have every confidence that by working together, we can and will get through these challenging times, by continuing to reach out with expert and compassionate care to meet the health care needs of the people of our community.

Sincerely,

Jo-anne Marr, Acting President and CEO

Dr. Larry Grossman, Chief of Staff

Warren Collier, Chair, Board of Trustees

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**York Central
Hospital**



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