

# A Message to Our Community

York Central Hospital is currently facing a significant surge in the number of patients visiting our Emergency Department (ED) and this is affecting the entire hospital. Wait times for emergency and other services may be longer than normal. We'd like to tell you why...

## **We are facing extraordinary demands for our services**

Southwest York Region is an area where growth and the resulting demand for health services is among the highest in the country. Visits to our Emergency Department have steadily increased over the last three years, putting pressure on our hospital. Some of the busiest days in the last 12 months were over the holiday period; since then, the patient volumes through the ED have shown few signs of slowing down.

## **We are not alone in facing these challenges**

Hospitals across Ontario are facing significant increases in the number of patients coming through their doors. Here in York Region there are a number of factors contributing to this surge, including: a large number of influenza cases, flu outbreaks in long-term care facilities, increased ambulance volumes and a continuing trend towards increasing numbers of older and more seriously ill patients visiting hospital EDs.

## **How are we addressing these challenges?**

Over the holidays when this pressure was at its peak, York Central Hospital took a series of actions to meet the needs of these patients and to ease the incredible pressure on our staff and physicians:

- Our staff and physicians responded by coming in on their holidays to work additional shifts anywhere they were most needed.
- We opened an additional 15 inpatient beds to help ease the congestion in the ED and to provide more appropriate care to those requiring admission.
- We are working closely with the CCAC and other community partners on a daily basis to make advance arrangements for home care and other in-home therapies so we may safely discharge patients sooner and make room for incoming ED patients.

## **What this means for our patients and community**

If you come to our ED for treatment, please be prepared for longer waits and to be patient. Our dedicated staff will do their best to see you as quickly as possible. We must see patients based on how sick they are, not how long they have been waiting. Please remember to bring your Health (OHIP) Card and a list of medications you are taking.

## **How you can help support us during this challenging time:**

- Get your flu shot. We can all do our part to reduce the number of influenza cases by getting our flu shot and encouraging our families and friends to do the same. Local health units have re-opened flu clinics to immunize Ontarians.
- Sometimes it is difficult to know whether your problem requires treatment in the ED. If you are unsure, please call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 to speak to a registered nurse 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.
- If you are feeling unwell, seek help at your doctor's office or a walk-in clinic before your condition worsens and requires emergency treatment. Ask about your family doctor's regular office hours and after-hours availability.
- Ensure you and your family have enough prescribed medication over weekends and holidays.
- Visit [www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions](http://www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions) to find available healthcare options close to home.

We thank you in advance for your understanding and support.

Sincerely,



Altaf Stationwala  
President and CEO



Dr. Larry Grossman  
Chief of Staff

Accountability Leadership Collaboration Respect Safety

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