

A message from the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Burlington Hospital CEOs Committee

Preparing for Service Reintegration at Local Hospitals

May 27, 2020

Hospitals across the region are working together to gradually resume scheduled care for patients. During the past two months, many aspects of hospital care were disrupted to create capacity for patients with COVID-19, optimize the use of personal protective equipment, and decrease the spread of the virus. While hospitals continued to provide emergency and urgent surgeries and procedures, the majority of scheduled care and procedures was deferred. Many onsite, outpatient services were also temporarily discontinued or rebooked using virtual care technology.

Hospital teams have been working to develop a staged approach to gradually and safely resume some scheduled, procedures and outpatient services across Ontario. Each hospital has developed a plan using the [criteria and approval process](#) developed by Ontario Health. These plans have been approved by local public health units, reviewed at a regional level, and approved by Ontario Health – West.

This week, the provincial government announced revisions to the Chief Medical Officer of Health Directive #2 to reflect the gradual restart of deferred and elective services. During the coming days and weeks, the initial phase of hospital plans will be activated, including a gradual increase in surgical, procedural, and onsite, outpatient care in area hospitals. Within program areas, patients will be prioritized on the basis of acuity and need. Hospital teams will continue to use virtual care technology where possible and appropriate, while also providing additional onsite services, based on need.

Hospitals are required to reserve a prescribed amount of inpatient bed capacity for COVID-19 care and maintain the ability to adjust service and occupancy levels in the event of a resurgence. There remains a continued focus on ensuring adequate inventory of personal protective equipment, as well as drugs required for surgeries, appropriate staffing levels, and the availability of post-hospital care.

“Across our region, hospitals are working together to coordinate our approach for the gradual resumption of services and to collaborate with health and community partners to optimize our shared capacity,” says Rob MacIsaac, President & CEO, Hamilton Health Sciences, and Chair, Regional CEO Committee for Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Burlington. “As always, the safety of patients, staff and physicians is our main priority.”

“The changes to our services in response to the pandemic have had an impact on many people who rely on hospitals for care,” says Rob MacIsaac. “We acknowledge the ongoing, remarkable efforts of health care providers and other partners, and the understanding of patients and families as we continue to manage this pandemic.”



Area hospitals will continue to work closely with one another and other partners to monitor key factors such as the availability of resources and the evolution of COVID-19 in the region, reassess plans and make adjustments required.

Information for patients:

- As appointments and procedures are resumed, patients will be contacted directly by their clinic or physician's office.
- Patients who have concerns about their health status should contact their clinic or physician's office for guidance.
- **Any patient who is experiencing serious symptoms should call 9-1-1 or go to their nearest emergency department.**