

Community Connection



Pembroke Regional Hospital Winter 2022 Edition



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PRH President And CEO Provides Overview Of Continuing COVID-19 Challenges



Pierre Noel

At the time of our last Community Connection there was a sense that the pandemic was ebbing and I, like many of you, was caught off guard by the rapid transmission of the Omicron variant. As our new reality hit us, we needed to react and move quickly in order to put in place measures to slow community spread and protect our vulnerable friends and neighbours. As it turned out, this Omicron wave of the pandemic was the wave that had the biggest impact on our hospital and placed the most strain on our resources.

Now though, thanks to the nature of the Omicron variant and thanks to everyone's continued efforts, this wave is now nearing its end and I am cautiously optimistic that we are going to be moving towards a new "normal" that enables us to move forward with our lives while learning to manage to live with the virus.

As you know, in Ontario we are now seeing the gradual reduction and removal of COVID-19 safety measures such as vaccine passports and masking requirements in many settings. However, due to the nature of our circumstances and the vulnerability of our patients, hospitals, like ours, will likely be one of the last settings to relax these measures.

COVID-19 Safety Measures

As a "highest risk" health care setting, we need to hold ourselves to a very high standard when it comes to protecting our patients, staff, physicians and volunteers. Hospitals will need to continue to maintain many current COVID-related policies on masking, vaccination, visitor restrictions, physical distancing and screening while moving more slowly and in concert with our regional health care partners in evaluating when and how to ease some of these restrictions. Clearly, protecting our vulnerable patients and ensuring that we do not compromise our ability to ramp up services to pre-pandemic levels is of critical importance.

Staffing Impacts

Staffing the hospital has been one of our biggest challenges since the start of the Omicron wave. On any given day in the past several weeks there have typically been between 40 and 50 staff and physicians unable to work due to COVID-19 infections or exposures. This is why some of our services, like non-urgent surgeries, needed to be rescheduled in order to allow our limited staff pool to be redeployed to support service areas in critical need. Thankfully we are beginning to see staff absences trending downwards but it is clear that these diminished but continuing shortages will continue to cause significant challenges throughout the hospital in the weeks ahead.

Supply Shortages

Although we have experienced some supply challenges throughout the pandemic, we have been seeing an increase in the shortage of many more items in recent weeks.

Continued on Page 2

Network 24 OHT Adopts New Name

Members of the *Network 24 Ontario Health Team (OHT)* are excited to share that they have adopted a new name as part of the OHT development process and will now be known as the *Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team*.

"During development of the joint application, names were suggested and then a general survey was completed by members last fall," said Co-Chair Joanne King. In January, not long after the new OHT received provincial approval, an online poll was held and *Ottawa Valley OHT* was accepted by 96% of the members who responded.

Co-Chair Dr. Declan Rowan said the new name speaks to the collaborative efforts taking place in local health care and to the inclusivity of all who are involved. He added that, with the name now confirmed, the OHT's Communications Working Group will be moving forward with further branding development including logo design and creation of a website.

The *Ottawa Valley OHT* received provincial approval last October. Since that time, 50 agencies and organizations have officially signed on to be a part of the OHT. Other development work has included establishment of a Steering Committee and working groups which will focus on the new OHT's three priority areas - mental health and addictions, aging at home, and helping residents connect with family doctors.

The goal of Ontario Health Teams is to ensure delivery of a patient-centred health system in which health care partners work together in a coordinated approach that connects patients with the services they need in a more structured and timely manner.

Represented among those health care partners are hospitals, long-term care homes, municipalities, paramedic services, family physicians, agencies that provide social services, palliative care, homecare, community care, mental health and addictions care, and public health — as well as patients and caregivers.



The *Ottawa Valley OHT's* catchment area includes a broad and diverse set of communities, home to 80,000 residents, and covers nearly 7,600 square kilometres in and around the Ottawa Valley.

Pembroke Regional Hospital Introduces New Declaration Of Patient Rights

We are pleased to share our new *Declaration of Patient Rights*, copies of which are now prominently displayed throughout our organization and posted on our website (www.pembrokeregionalhospital.ca).

This new document was developed in collaboration with the PRH Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) and replaces the former *Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities* which was written more than a decade ago.

Prompted by provincial best practice recommendations from the Minister's Patient and Family Advisory Council that these documents be regularly reviewed to ensure they align not only with a hospital's mission, vision and values, but also with their Board's goals and strategic plan, our PFAC reviewed many examples from hospitals across Ontario as part of the development process. Ultimately, an example from the Kemptville District Hospital was selected as a template for ours.

Further work was then done to make the document our own, while ensuring it would be easy to read and understand, and that all who use our programs and services would feel a connection to the language and terms used.

Transparency

- To receive the best possible care that the hospital can deliver, using the most current knowledge and resources.
- To have my care provided in the safest manner possible to reduce the likelihood of errors or harm.
- To have the opportunity to review my medical records with my healthcare providers, should I so choose.

Excellence & Confidentiality

- To effective communication and the opportunity to ask my healthcare provider questions about my care.
- To know that my personal information and privacy is respected and protected.
- To receive this current information in a manner and format that I understand and in the language of my choosing.

Respect & Dignity

- To be treated with courtesy and respect that fully recognizes my dignity, privacy, diversity and human rights.
- To have my healthcare providers introduce themselves and call me by my name.
- To receive competent and timely care, every encounter.

I have the right...

- To receive complete and current information on my condition and treatment plan, so that I and my family can understand, question and be active participants with my healthcare team, with the ability to participate in clinical decisions.
- To have a discharge plan in order to understand next steps in my care that maximizes my independence when I leave the hospital.

Collaboration & Communication

- To be treated with empathy, patience, kindness and dignity with a focus on my body, mind and spiritual needs.
- To have healthcare providers that understand the patient story.
- To designate a person to represent or support me in decisions about my treatment or care.

Compassion & Caring

PRH Works Towards Expansion Of Diversity, Equity And Inclusion Efforts

In the weeks and months ahead, our hospital will be working towards broader inclusion of those we recognize, celebrate and honour year-round. Recently this has included recognition and celebration of Black History Month and International Women's Day, as well as the creation of a Land Acknowledgement Statement and a resource section for Indigenous patients and families which is now available on our website.

This is all part of a larger initiative to expand our diversity, equity and inclusion. We look forward to sharing more about the work being done.

PRH President And CEO Provides Overview Of Challenges...Continued From Front

While we had been averaging approximately 30 items on back order over the past several months, in recent weeks we have been averaging more than 300 items on back order or no longer available. As a result of these supply chain constraints, hospitals, including ours, have needed to adapt and identify viable substitutions. Thankfully, there has been great collaboration with our regional partners in the sharing of supplies and the prioritization of high priority settings.

Ramp Up Of Services

Despite all of our recent challenges, there is still some good news. Our Diagnostic Imaging

Department has returned to full service and full volumes and our Ambulatory Clinics are almost back to regular service levels. Our Surgical Program is currently operating at approximately 70% of pre-pandemic volumes with surgical volumes gradually increasing based on staff availability and bed capacity. This process of reintroducing deferred surgeries has been consistent with provincial directions and is well aligned with our regional partners. We hope to be back up to 100% in all areas as soon as possible.

Thank You

With coronavirus numbers decreasing and with

spring just around the corner, I think we are all feeling a renewed sense of optimism. All of us at the Pembroke Regional Hospital would like to thank you for doing your part in helping to get us to this new place. We recognize how challenging the past two years have been and ask that you continue to be kind and understanding of those around you.

As we watch and worry about what is going on in other parts of the world, we are reminded that it is only through acts of kindness and through caring for others that we can move forward in peace and harmony.

PRH Expands Its Ability To Care For High Acuity Patients In The ICU

Some of the region's sickest patients will soon benefit from expanded capacity in the Pembroke Regional Hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and a new model of care led by an ICU specialist. For many, this will mean the opportunity to receive critical care close to home and will reduce the likelihood of being transferred to an Ottawa area hospital.

While reaching this point in the process has taken a lot of time, work and dedication by staff, physicians and other stakeholders in the region, Beth Brownlee, Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services and Chief Nursing Executive said the end result will enable the hospital to improve the quality of care for acutely ill patients, reduce the need to transfer some of those patients to other critical care facilities and ensure better patient outcomes.

"By providing 24/7 critical care coverage through the introduction of intensivists and other staff with specialized skills, families will be able to keep their loved ones closer to home when they are most vulnerable," Ms. Brownlee said.

An intensivist is a physician who has advanced training and certification in treating and diagnosing critical illness and injury. Intensivists have experience in treating patients with complex health care needs and are particularly skilled in treatment of critical health problems such as shock (severe circulatory and heart failure), respiratory failure (severe breathing problems), hemorrhage (severe bleeding problems), CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation and many others.

An intensivist has the primary responsibility for the ICU patient's care, oversees all decision-making and coordinates other services the

patient may need – including those from other specialists.

Dr. Tom Hurley, Chief of Staff said that the expanded services offered by intensivists build on the many successes already achieved by the Pembroke Regional Hospital's ICU team.

"The previous model was highly successful, allowing for the care of 491 patients in 2020-2021 alone. However, the addition of the intensivists, and the expanded role of nursing and allied support staff, along with an investment in new equipment will allow for an increase in the breadth and severity of critical illnesses treated locally," Dr. Hurley said.

He added that the hospital's ICU program has been expanded in partnership with regional hospitals who will continue to care for certain critically ill Renfrew County patients, such as those needing urgent dialysis, neurosurgical procedures or invasive cardiac care.

In addition to the recruitment of intensivists to work at PRH, Ms. Brownlee said work is being done to also expand the team caring for more critically ill patients. This includes the recruitment of registered nurses (RNs) who have critical care experience, as well as education and training for RNs who have an interest in critical care. Already, some of the department's RNs and respiratory therapists have spent time with their counterparts at the Queensway-Carleton Hospital as part of a mentorship program.

Already, all of the work and time and invested funding is paying off.

While it's currently in a "soft launch" phase, the expanded expertise and care model has enabled the hospital to manage additional critically ill patients closer to home.



Beth Brownlee



Dr. Tom Hurley

PRH President And CEO Announces Retirement Plans



Pierre Noel

After more than 30 years of dedicated service to the healthcare sector, Pembroke Regional Hospital's President and CEO, Pierre Noel, has shared his plans to retire at the end of this year. In doing so, Pierre has expressed a commitment to assisting the hospital Board in the process of recruiting a successor and to ensuring a smooth leadership transition.

Pierre has led PRH for the past 15 years and has had lifelong involvement with the Hospital. "It has truly been an honour and a privilege for me to be involved in leading the hospital in which I was born, in the community in which I was raised, and in the Ottawa Valley where my heart belongs," he said.

"Pierre has been a visionary and a true leader and has collaborated widely to translate this vision into a high quality and responsive regional health service organization," said Richard Wilson, PRH's Board Chair. "His calm and steady hand, particularly during these past two years of the pandemic, will surely be missed, but we know that he will be with us in the year ahead and will help guide us through this next transition," he continued.

During his time at PRH, Pierre was involved in many local, regional and provincial initiatives, and has served as both the Chair of the Board of the Ontario Hospital Association and the Chair of the Board of the Catholic Health Association of Ontario.

For the past five years, Pierre has taken on the additional responsibility of the role of President and CEO of the Mattawa Hospital and Algonquin Nursing Home in Mattawa. Both PRH and the Mattawa facilities, sponsored by the Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario, will be initiating a search for his replacement in these roles in the months ahead.



Richard Wilson

Celebrating The Work Of Pembroke's Vaccination Team

Following the recent closure of Pembroke's Crandall Street COVID-19 vaccination site, the PRH-led clinic team is being celebrated for the tremendous work accomplished by all involved.

Between November, 2021 and the end of February, over 18,000 vaccinations were provided by this team of up to 80 people comprised of PRH staff, Renfrew County and District Health Unit staff, family physicians, paramedics, ProTech Security staff and volunteers.

The clinic was also supported by staff from the Petawawa Centennial Family Health Centre, ConnectWell Community Health, Mulvihill Drug Mart and the West Champlain Family Health Centre.

And when you factor in some of the early COVID-19 booster doses given by team members at the Health Unit's office, the total number of doses given since closing the Pembroke Memorial Centre vaccination site last fall is estimated to be closer to 24,000.



"Even more incredible, is that when booster doses were first approved for those aged 18+, this team doubled their capacity in a week and tripled their capacity in three weeks, while also successfully moving sites to accommodate additional volume; all without having to cancel a single day of clinics," said Andrew Keck, former Renfrew County and District Health Unit manager for the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Vaccination programs.

"Congratulations to all involved. Your determination, adaptability, and commitment to serve your community has ensured the continued health of local residents throughout the pandemic while providing approximately 40% of the vaccine doses in Renfrew County," said Sabine Mersmann, PRH Senior Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services - Partnerships and Integration.



We would like to express a sincere THANK YOU to the healthcare team at Pembroke Regional Hospital for consistently providing high quality compassionate and professional care during this challenging pandemic period. You are all to be commended for your perseverance and adaptability as you supported patients and families.

The Pembroke Regional Hospital Patient and Family Advisory Council

Pembroke Regional Hospital Achieves High Rankings In Stroke Report Card

The Pembroke Regional Hospital is pleased to share that its health care team has recently received top marks in a provincial stroke report card for several aspects of its regional stroke care.

Among the results in the most recent 2019-2020 report, PRH, which is the designated District Stroke Centre for Renfrew County, was ranked number one in the province for three aspects of care and was classified as a “high performer” in the top five for an additional two.

Ontario’s Annual Stroke Report provides an overview of stroke system performance in the province by ranking approximately 30 aspects of care using hospital-specific, regional and provincial data. The eleven provincial stroke networks and the hospitals within those use this report to guide planning and decision making and reflect best practice which leads to system improvements, and ultimately better outcomes for patients and families with stroke.

“We are one of the few places that has an integrated stroke unit that co-locates patients requiring both acute medical care for stroke and rehabilitation,” said Sabine Mersmann, Senior Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services - Partnerships and Integration. “This unit is supported by a specialized team of health care professionals and has the capacity and ability to prioritize care for acute stroke patients in a timely manner.” She added that there are many benefits to having the patient access specialized stroke care as soon as medically possible.

She said that this enables PRH to have the shortest provincial wait time for admission to the Rehabilitation unit once the patient is medically stable.

PRH also has one of the highest referral rates to the hospital’s Stroke Prevention Program for patients who have been seen in the Emergency Department, often after experiencing a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA). Ms. Mersmann said this is the direct result of processes that have been put in place and staff knowledge of the program. She added that Emergency Department referrals to the Stroke Prevention program can be made from any hospital within Renfrew County.



The hospital was also rated as a high performer in several areas including access to home-based rehabilitation and the number of minutes patients receive direct therapy while in rehabilitation - the aim being to allocate as many minutes as possible which leads to better outcomes, a quicker return home and a greater recovery of function.

“In addition to the areas recognized, we as a hospital are very proud of the work that has been

done and the achievements that have been made in all areas of stroke care by those on our team,” said Pembroke Regional Hospital President and CEO Pierre Noel. “Each helps to improve the hospital experience for our patients and their families and contributes to the individuals journeys of recovery.”

Physiatrist Dr. Debbie Timpson said that these latest results not only speak to the quality of care but also serve as a great tool for validating successes and identifying where improvements are required. “It is rewarding for our rehab team and important for our patients to have objective proof that we not only meet but, in a number of areas, exceed expectations. These standards help us to work towards providing the best care possible for our patients,” Dr. Timpson said.

As the District Stroke Centre, PRH works together with the county’s paramedics, Home and Community Care and other community partners to ensure that patients receive the best care possible. Knowing and understanding stroke symptoms is the first step to getting help quickly and knowing that it’s time to call 9-1-1.

“There are time sensitive treatments that some people qualify for that can greatly improve the outcome of a stroke,” said Sonya Silver, PRH Vascular Health and Ambulatory Clinics Manager. She said that paramedics are trained to assess for stroke symptoms and contact the hospital en route so that the stroke team is ready for a patient’s arrival, important steps when every minute counts.

Petawawa Pantry Food Bank And Mental Health Services Of Renfrew County Partner

Over the course of the pandemic, The Petawawa Pantry Food Bank and Mental Health Services of Renfrew County have teamed up to ensure that clients in crisis throughout the region have basic necessities such as food and personal care products.

Launched initially as part of a pilot project in January, 2021, “crisis boxes” containing approximately 30 non-perishable items including easy-to-prepare foods, and necessary personal care items like: toothpaste, tooth brush, soap, shampoo, and deodorant were prepared and delivered to those in need. A \$10 grocery gift card was also included enabling clients to purchase their own perishable items.

The project was made permanent last June based on its success and in 2021 alone, a total of 695 boxes were prepared and distributed, including nearly \$7,000 worth of grocery gift cards, made possible through grant funding received on behalf of the program.

“Throughout 2020 and 2021, the food bank mobilized its community outreach program which offers a delivery service for individuals who are ill, disabled, or struggling with mental health issues, and as part of this we reached out to 25 social service agencies and organizations which serve Petawawa,” said Laurie Alton, President and Co-Founder of The Petawawa Pantry Food Bank who also works for Mental Health Services of Renfrew County, a program operated by the Pembroke

Regional Hospital.

Through this collaboration, a connection was made with the region’s Mental Health Services Mobile Crisis Team which works with residents who find themselves unhoused or insecurely housed. Further discussions led to creation of a list of items that clients would need and from there, the pilot project began to take shape, Ms. Alton said, acknowledging her role as program lead with assistance from volunteers Mohammad El Fitori, Goldie Tunney, and Kelsey Michaud.



Miranda Giroux, left and Laurie Alton. Missing from the photo are Mohammad El Fitori, Goldie Tunney and Kelsey Michaud

“This initiative has been pivotal for our clients in the community and has brought an ease of access for food to our most vulnerable clients,” said MHSRC Crisis Worker Miranda Giroux. “This partnership has allowed the Crisis Team to better support clients who are in need of basic necessities such as food, and hygiene items. The

clients we serve have truly benefitted from the wonderful generosity of The Petawawa Pantry Food Bank.”

Mireille Delorme, Director for Mental Health Services Renfrew County added that, “Food security is essential for mental health and we are most thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with the Petawawa Pantry Food Bank on this important initiative.”

The Petawawa Pantry Food Bank opened its storefront location in December 2016.

During the pandemic, they were challenged to not only adapt their process to align with COVID-19 safety measures but also to find ways to work with and assist other community partners – the “crisis box” project was one of the outcomes.

“A food bank must continually monitor how it best serves the community,” said Linda Paterson, secretary for The Petawawa Pantry. “It is necessary to seek new and innovative ways to access people who are food insecure, and to improve aspects of the service. It has become apparent that a storefront model, for a food bank is not always the most efficient, effective or cost effective method of providing service.”

Volunteer Manager Wayne O’Regan agreed and noted that there are many reasons residents turn to a food bank for assistance. “By supplying these boxes to local crisis workers, we have discovered new ways to support those in our community and that’s a win for us all.”



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Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation
Fondation de l'Hôpital Régional de Pembroke

The Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation has raised \$20 million over the last 20 years

- Building Fund - raising \$12 million for an overall major renovation and expansion.
- Maternity & Child Care - raising \$700,000 to upgrade the facilities used for labour and delivery services.
- A Gift of Hope - raising \$600,000 for a Satellite Dialysis Unit at the Pembroke Regional Hospital.
- MRI Image Matters - raising \$4.5 million to bring a Magnetic Resonance Imagine Machine to our Regional Hospital.
- Cutting Edge - raising \$2.5 million to renovate the circa 1950's Surgical Floor and support the Orthopaedic program.
- Cancer Care - our current campaign which will raise \$3.5 million to fund the upgrades and expansion of the chemotherapy/medical daycare unit and pharmacy at PRH. This campaign was launched in January of 2021 and so far has raised over \$1.7 million.



3 TICKETS

\$5

10 TICKETS

\$10

40 TICKETS

\$20

WWW.PRHCATCHTHEACE.CA



We need an additional \$1.75 million to reach our campaign's goal of \$3.5 million. Please donate to help make a difference to all those who need to use the Chemotherapy and Medical Day Care Unit at the Pembroke Regional Hospital.

YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT THE Cancer Care Campaign

Please complete this donation form and return it with an enclosed payment, if applicable, to Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation at 705 Mackay St, Pembroke, ON, K8A 1G8
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