



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

March 31, 2021

Dear Renfrew County and District Hospital CEOs and Staff,

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly, both locally and across the Province of Ontario. The number of COVID-19 cases in March has drastically increased from February. In the first 29 days of March, we had 87 positive cases, and 28 of these have been in the last seven days.

We have also seen our first cases involving variants of concern (VOC) in Renfrew County and District. In total, 13 cases involving a VOC have been identified in the last week.

This is a major concern, considering VOCs have shown to be more transmissible, and have an increased risk of hospitalization, and death. This impact is being seen across the Province. COVID-19 related hospitalizations have increased by 26 percent in the last seven days. There are also 34 active COVID-19 hospital outbreaks in Ontario. We currently have more Renfrew County and District patients hospitalized for COVID-19 than ever before either at Pembroke Regional Hospital or in Ottawa. What is startling is how quickly the disease can spread once it finds its way into a hospital, despite all the heightened precautions and practices in place.

We will be moving into the Orange Zone imminently and Ottawa is going into Grey, one step short of a lockdown. As a result, we must increase restrictions to prevent further spread so we can protect our hospitals, hospital staff, and patients.

Therefore, today I am directing hospitals in Renfrew County and District to implement the following measures:

- 1. Visits will be limited to one designated visitor per patient. The listing of a designated general visitor can be changed only at the discretion of the hospital.**
- 2. For patients nearing end of life, two designated visitors per patient will be permitted. Exceptions are only at the discretion of the hospital after considering the ability to physically distance and manage additional volume.**
- 3. It is strongly recommended that families appoint a designated visitor from Renfrew County and District because Ottawa and the other neighbouring regions are in a more precarious situation than our region.**

The restrictions on visitors will be reviewed on a bi-weekly basis, and I will notify you when the restrictions can be removed. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation in these challenging times.

Keep up your great work to maintain hospital services, protect patients and deliver vaccines.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert Cushman
Acting Medical Officer of Health
Renfrew County and District Health Unit