



MEDIA RELEASE

Low risk associated with COVID-19 case at St. Francis Memorial Hospital

A positive case of COVID-19 has been confirmed amongst the healthcare team at SFMH in Barry's Bay. However, hospital administration reassures the public that it is still safe to come to the hospital.

"We want to reassure the community that we have been working closely with many stakeholders, regional partners and our medical staff, as well as both the Renfrew County District Health Unit and Ottawa Public Health to ensure that we are responding effectively and efficiently to this matter. The safety of our patients, staff, physicians and members of our community is our highest priority," stated Julia Boudreau, SFM CEO.

Diligent contact tracing has taken place and all those who may have come into close or prolonged contact with the positive case have been provided direction for self-monitoring and self-isolating as warranted by their specific situation. It is important to note that because of the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and adherence to related safety procedures, all contacts to date are considered low risk.

Practices and policies have been in place at SFMH since the beginning of the pandemic to protect patients, their families, SFMH staff and physicians. That includes screening, restricted visiting, universal masking and diligent hand washing.

"SFMH is here to meet the healthcare needs of our community. Staff are following proven infection control and occupational health methods, and SFMH has been able to act early, conduct effective tracing and ensure that we can continue to provide safe care to our patients," confirmed Dr. Jason Malinowski, SFMH Chief of Staff.

Dr. Rob Cushman, RCDHU Acting Medical Officer of Health notes there have been more cases this past December and so far in January compared to our previous numbers in Renfrew County and District.

"This is a stark message. It underscores how important it is for everyone to continue practising hand hygiene, masking, and physical distancing, as well as limiting contacts and unnecessary travel. In order to get through the winter and before vaccines are widely available, we must all do our best," said Cushman.

If you have mild cold/flu symptoms, it is best to stay home and self-isolate. You can make an appointment for a COVID-19 test through the Renfrew County VTAC at 1-844-727-6404. If you experience worsening symptoms such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, please present to the emergency department for care.