



No patient cases, no COVID outbreak at SFMH

As COVID-19 cases continue to increase across Ontario and beyond, the number of Renfrew County COVID cases is also on the rise, including in the Barry's Bay area.

With this in mind, it is essential that all members of the public adhere to the Public Health [measures and restrictions](#) outlined in [Ontario's Stay-At Home order](#) enacted on January 13, 2021. This includes staying home unless it is essential to go out, only gathering indoors with those who live in your household, limiting outdoor gatherings to five people and distancing or wearing a mask.

"As we begin to see cases rise in our area, it is even more critical that we all work together to stay safe by following the guidelines and restrictions put in place by the province and by Public Health," notes Dr. Rob Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health for Renfrew County District Health Unit (RCDHU).

As announced on January 11, a member of the St. Francis Memorial Hospital healthcare team tested positive. Since then, two individuals associated with the first case have tested positive. Both have been isolating per Public Health guidance and have not been at the hospital since the first case was identified.

The hospital has not been declared in outbreak, as these cases do not meet the Ministry of Health definition of an outbreak in a public hospital.

SFMH and RCDHU have been and continue working very closely to take proactive measures to prevent any further cases and exposures. All other individuals who were tested after being identified through contact tracing have been negative and no patients are at risk.

The public is assured that it is safe to go to SFMH when in need of care.

"It remains safe to attend the hospital for care as required. SFMH has been following all protocols and guidance from Public Health with regards to tracing and testing," states Julia Boudreau, SFMH CEO.

"We have been encouraging staff and physicians, visitors and patients to come forward to our Occupational Health Nurse if they have symptoms and we have been providing education about self-monitoring for symptoms and self-isolating."

In the public setting it is important for anyone who develops symptoms to isolate and call their primary care giver or Renfrew County VTAC to book a test (1-844-727-6404), or call the RCDHU (613-732-3629 ext. 977) for information.

Boudreau also emphasized that while the hospital strives to keep the community informed and up to date, confidentiality also remains very important, whether it is a patient, staff member, or physician.

"Everyone has the right to privacy of their health information and we are ensuring that no one's confidentiality is breached as we work in concert at all times with Renfrew County District Public Health Unit to ensure SFMH remains safe for patients, visitors, staff and physicians."

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