**Tuesday, March 18, 2020**

The community has been notified that our Hospital will cancel elective surgeries and other non-essential services as of Friday, March 20 at 3:30. Those who require urgent health care will always receive it at our Hospital. Essential services, such as intensive care, stroke care, and life- and limb-saving surgeries will continue, with all other services provided based on priority needs. Patients who are impacted will be contacted directly by their physicians or the Hospital.

Although cancellations can be frustrating, patients are being supportive. They understand that this measure is taken in their best interest, and for the protection of the entire community. We all want to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The first day of operation of our COVID-19 Assessment Centre went smoothly. 28 people attended, as instructed by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU), and 20 of them were tested. Results are managed by the TBDHU, and they will report on any positive cases.

We understand that this is a stressful situation, and people want to be tested to learn if they have COVID-19 or a less serious illness for peace of mind. The decision of whether or not a person needs to be tested is determined by evidence-based medical guidelines, which include a person’s symptoms and potential for exposure to the virus. It is NOT a matter of the number of tests available. Our Hospital has a sufficient number of tests.

Social distancing has the bigger role to play in containing spread of COVID-19. People are strongly encouraged to heed the recommendations of Public Health and limit contact with others.

People are doing their best to stay informed about COVID-19, which can be challenging with so much misinformation circulating in the community. Please refer your friends and family to the TBDHU website [www.tbdhu.com](http://www.tbdhu.com) for up-to-date, useful and reliable information about testing, self-monitoring, self-isolation and travel.

We launched online screening for staff and professional staff. We experienced a few glitches this morning and are sorting that out. Our aim is to reduce delays at all points of entry for everyone.

We are doing our best to be responsive and responsible. This quote from D. Michael Ryan, Executive Director of the World Health Organization, guides and inspires us.

“Perfection is the enemy of the good when it comes to emergency management. Speed trumps perfection and the problem in society we have at the moment is everyone is afraid of making a mistake—everyone is afraid of the consequence of error. But the greatest error is not to move. The greatest error is to be paralyzed by the fear of failure.”

Every day bears witness to the extraordinary actions and efforts of our staff, professional staff and volunteers. In these challenging times, we see just how dedicated, professional and selfless people are. Whether on the front lines or behind the scenes, the people working in health care are stepping up to help the entire community see us through this situation. Thank you for all you are doing.

For questions about COVID-19 testing criteria, please contact the TBDHU’s Infectious Disease Program at 807-625-5900 or toll free at 1-888-294-6630.

Local COVID-19 case status: <https://www.tbdhu.com/coronavirus>

Provincial COVID-19 case status: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus#section-0>

Canada COVID-19 case status: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

COVID-19 Daily Situation Report videos: <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-update-videos>

All Hospital COVID-19 updates are available on the iNtranet at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/>