**Friday, March 20, 2020**

For today’s comprehensive video update that includes comments by City of Thunder Bay Mayor Bill Mauro, Dr. Stewart Kennedy, and Dr. Zaki Ahmed, please visit <http://tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information>

Our Human Resources Team is developing a plan to phase in a remote work strategy for Hospital staff as appropriate. This is another measure to protect the health system and its workers from COVID-19, while ensuring that critical health services continue to operate. Guidelines and other resources will provided as soon as details are confirmed.

COVID-19 Assessment Centre update: Yesterday (Wednesday, March 19), 42 people were seen, and 42 of them tested. The COVID-19 Assessment Centre is available to people who have been directed there by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit or Telehealth Ontario.

The Hospital’s occupancy is currently at approximately 80%. Our aim is to further reduce occupancy so that beds are available for any arising urgent care needs, and to conserve health care staff and resources. The reduction of elective surgeries and non-essential services is contributing. Other factors adding to reduced occupancy may be attributed to the community’s response to social distancing, including less transmission of the flu and fewer motor vehicle accidents, personal injuries, etc.

Ventilators and ICU beds: Our Hospital currently has 25 ventilators and 22 ICU beds. The government has secured additional ventilators for distribution throughout the province. Adherence by everyone in the community to expert advice regarding travel restrictions, self-isolation, social distancing and hand hygiene will reduce the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the need for treatment.

Examples of safe behaviours are everywhere. It is the single most important strategy to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We applaud everyone’s diligence. Please continue to avoid group gatherings and avoid movement through areas of the Hospital, as well as between buildings.

Hospital teams are adjusting to new circumstances. We celebrate the creativity demonstrated by staff to find and implement approaches and solutions that keep people safe, adhere to social distancing, and support patients. Managers are supported to explore options, be innovative and bring ideas forward.

Hospital leaders have been tasked to complete Business Impact Assessments (to gather information on potential disruptions, impacts and recovery strategies), as well as Business Continuity Plans (to gather updates on the evolving situation/resourcing changes). These will inform decisions and planning for continuity of services and functions across the Hospital.

Health care providers working in the community need to be protected. Anyone visiting a family physician or health clinic should self-screen in advance. Public Health Ontario has one at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>

Looking to get the straight story? Get COVIID-19 myth busters from the World Health Organization, and help to share credible information. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

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: <http://tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information>

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