

COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping You Safe



To: All Hospital and Health Research Institute staff and professional staff

From: Dr. Stewart Kennedy, COVID-19 Incident Manager

Date: Tuesday, October 6

RE: **Reinforcement of Mandatory Masks for Patients and Care Partners**

The health and safety of patients, staff, professional staff, scientists, learners and the community is our Hospital's utmost priority. To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, it remains mandatory that all staff, patients, Care Partners and Essential Care Partners wear masks while inside the Hospital.

To support a standard approach to manage patients and visitors who will not wear a mask when entering the hospital, the following actions will be implemented immediately:

- All patients booked for appointments will be informed of the mandatory mask requirements prior to coming to the Hospital, either by mail, email or telephone (*messaging provided below*).
- Patients who have a medical reason for not wearing a mask should be identified in advance when possible, and should have their appointments booked at the beginning or end of the day, or when it is least busy in the receiving department;
- When a patient arrives at the Hospital for a surgery or outpatient appointment who cannot wear a mask due to a health condition:
 - The patient must present signed medical documentation from either a Physician or Nurse Practitioner that states they have a health condition which exempts them from wearing a mask, otherwise access will be denied by the Screeners. The note does not need to disclose what the condition is;
 - When the patient arrives at the Hospital, the receiving department will be called by the Screener and a staff member from that department (who has donned appropriate PPE for the interaction) will escort the patient to their designated area;
 - The receiving department must have a separate area for the individual to wait, similar to when patients fail screening.
- In circumstances where a patient does not have a medical note, and refuses to wear a mask:
 - The Screener will inform the patient that they will not be allowed to enter the Hospital and the patient will immediately be provided with a letter that outlines the Hospital's mandatory mask policy;

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- The receiving department will be notified that the patient has been denied access due to mask refusal and that the patient has been advised to contact the receiving department to discuss other care options.
- Essential Care Partners and Care Partners who refuse to wear a mask are not permitted entrance into our Hospital;
- If an issue arises, Security can be contacted. If the patient refuses to leave the premises, Security will contact the Thunder Bay Police Department for assistance.

All staff and professional staff are encouraged to support this important safety measure. Should you see someone in the Hospital who is not wearing a mask, please kindly remind them that masks are mandatory for everyone's protection and provide information as to where a mask can be obtained for their use while on site. Cloth masks are available for purchase from Season's Gift Shop.

Please ensure that the following language is included in all of your departments' pre-appointment patient communications:

"For the protection of all, everyone entering the Hospital is screened for COVID-19. Please self-screen before your appointment.

To self-screen, use the enclosed tool or visit <http://tbh.net/screening>. Self-Screening could help you avoid an unnecessary trip to the Hospital.

If you fail screening, please call (insert department telephone number here). Your appointment may need to be rescheduled.

Important Notice - *Masks are mandatory while inside the Hospital. You must provide documentation from a Doctor or Nurse Practitioner if you are unable to wear a mask due to a health condition. Only written medical documentation, such as a signed letter from primary care provider, ensures your access to the Hospital without a mask. If you do not have your own mask, one will be provided when you arrive at the Hospital."*

Thank you for your continued commitment to safety.

For more information, please contact your supervisor.

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