

HOSPITAL ACTIVITY UPDATE



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

February 3, 2021

COVID-19 Status as of 9:10 am:

Presumptive Cases in Hospital	Total Positive Cases in Hospital	Positive Cases in ICU	Hospital Occupancy	Active COVID-19 cases in the TBDHU district	Our Hospital's Internal Response Level
5	2	0	89.1%	142	Control

As we approach one full year of dealing with this pandemic at TBRHSC and an ongoing lockdown, it is crucial that everyone be self-aware about their health and well-being – and the well-being of their colleagues. Please try to spend time outdoors to take in nature and sunshine and remember to make use of the valuable resources available to you <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/staff-wellness-resources/>.

We also want to put a renewed focus on PPE – it's the single most important strategy to protect you and those around you from the spread of infection. Creative “Are you equipPEd?” reminders throughout the hospital recognize that pandemic fatigue is real and suggest PPE compliance checks. Thank you for your diligence.

The global slowdown of the Pfizer vaccine supply may be understandably frustrating for some as many of us are ready to roll up our sleeves to be vaccinated. Health care workers remain part of the first phase of the province's vaccine rollout plan. Your patience is truly appreciated during this difficult time.

Meanwhile, we are beginning to plan for regular supplies of vaccine. Our hospital is anticipated to receive more Pfizer vaccine to complete second doses to LTC residents and other health care workers within the target timeframe. Over time, and as directed by the province, everyone in the community will be vaccinated who is eligible and willing. To prepare, we are looking into options for a larger space to administer vaccines efficiently.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, staff and professional staff have demonstrated extraordinary dedication and resourcefulness in a variety of ways. Your perseverance is appreciated, and has made a difference. One of the many positive outcomes is a reduced backlog of procedures, which enables patients to get the care they have been waiting for. To recover the backlog of surgeries and endoscopic procedures resulting from shut down during Wave 1 of the pandemic, additional rooms and extended hours have been in operation. These 7-day operations will continue for endoscopies until March 31, 2021, at which time the backlog is expected to be cleared. Surgeries are recovered at a rate of 150-200 cases per month. To clear the approximately 3,000 cases on the backlog, Operating Room hours will be extended until at least September 31, 2021. The level of recovery we have achieved is an impressive example of how Patient and Family Centred Care remains at the centre of everything we do.

Congratulations to our hospital's laboratory team, which is improving patient care with new technology. Thealdi-Tof technology (matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization time of flight) enables our skilled Medical Laboratory Technologists to identify approximately 2000 different organisms by their unique protein signatures 24 to 48 hours sooner than conventional methods. Earlier identification enables earlier antibiotic susceptibility testing, allowing for the provision of targeted antibiotic therapies sooner, improving diagnosis, treatment and outcomes for patients in Northwestern Ontario.

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Our hospital is represented on the City's Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) as a community partner in the ongoing management of the COVID-19 situation. Recent discussions focused on the outbreaks at the Thunder Bay Correctional Facility and the Thunder Bay District Jail. Processes are in place to support the safe transfer and care of anyone impacted by the outbreak and in need of acute care at our hospital.

Your Questions Answered

Q. What will the repercussions be for staff who choose to not get vaccinated?

A. Although the Ministry of Health does not currently have a policy in place compelling health care workers to be vaccinated, we strongly encourage all employees to be vaccinated as it becomes available. Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are very effective at keeping you from getting COVID-19.

Q. Will there be any compensation for staff who are using their own equipment to work from home?

A. Working remotely is voluntary. Therefore, associated costs, such as internet access, technology and furniture, are the responsibility of the employee unless otherwise agreed per the individual remote work agreement. If an employee is unable to work remotely for any reason they will be accommodated on site. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) made the home office expense deduction available to more Canadians and simplified the method for claiming this deduction on personal 2020 income tax returns. More information was shared via Informed: <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/informed/simplified-process-for-claiming-home-office-expenses-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

To submit your question, and to see answers to previous questions, please visit www.tbh.net/thq.