

# COVID-19 UPDATE

## Keeping You Safe



To: All Staff and Professional Staff

From: Dr. Peter Voros, COVID-19 Incident Manager, EVP, In-Patient Care Programs

Date: May 11, 2021

RE: **Enhanced Extern Program – Workforce Support for Hospitals**

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The Ministry of Health recognizes that hospitals continue to face increasing health human resources pressures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to these pressures, the Ministry has introduced the Enhanced Extern Program (EEP) to bolster existing workforce capacity and introduce much needed reinforcements. We are pleased to share that Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre has been made eligible for participation in the EEP Program.

The EEP is a time-limited program (April 16, 2021 to March 31, 2022) for eligible hospitals which will create employment opportunities for qualifying nursing, medical, respiratory therapy, and paramedic students to work in our hospital on paid assignments. The program will also create leadership opportunities for current nurses who take the role of Extern Mentor/Coordinator. This temporary funding will allow us to hire an additional 23.7 FTE/staff to support patient care needs.

Staff--Externs that will be part of the EEP will work in the capacity of an unregulated health care provider. Nursing clinical externs will work in collaboration with the nursing team under the direct and/or indirect supervision of a nursing professional and may perform pre-identified controlled acts as authorized under the Regulated Health Professionals Act. Externs will be hired into the Unit Care Aide (UCA) classification within the Nursing Resource Team and Respiratory Therapy learners can be hired into a related role.

EEPs have already been successfully implemented at other Ontario hospitals and are an excellent opportunity to create much needed workforce capacity. This program also provides valuable experience in support of our health care learners and is an opportunity for us to welcome and nurture our future employees.

Additional UCA positions will be posted in the coming weeks with a goal to start on-boarding early June. Expressions of Interest for the Mentor/Coordinator roles will also be posted in the coming weeks. If you have any questions, you may contact Meaghan Sharp ([sharpme@tbh.net](mailto:sharpme@tbh.net)), Dawna Perry ([perryd@tbh.net](mailto:perryd@tbh.net)) or Amy Carr ([carram@tbh.net](mailto:carram@tbh.net)).

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