

CEO's Blog

July 30, 2021



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

Dear Staff, Professional Staff, Learners, Volunteers, Researchers, and Board members

Greetings, Boozhoo and Bonjour,

I wanted to send a quick mid-summer touch base.

I hope you all are getting outside when you can, enjoying the natural beauty here in the northwest and safely reconnecting with family and friends. I was fortunate earlier this week to go on a walkabout with some staff colleagues and I highly recommend it for everyone. There were some fantastic discussions, great ideas, and plenty of suggestions that will help in the development of our Strategic Plan 2026, which will be released later this Fall.

As you know, the number of COVID-19 cases is down overall in our region and across Ontario, which has led to the province opening up a bit more in recent months. Here at TBRHSC, we welcomed back volunteers and opened up to care partners to support our patients and their families.

Operationally, we are focused on stabilizing the organization while recognizing the challenges that could lie ahead. One key area of importance at the moment is coping with summer staffing while having high occupancy within many areas such as medicine, surgery, mental health, intensive care and emergency. We are working closely to monitor the situation and addressing issues as they arise. Pandemic-specific funding has now ceased with limitations for specific roles like the assessment centre. As we enter the "new normal" there is no doubt there will be challenges to the organization as we continue to ensure overall access to safe quality care for all.

While cases are down, it is critical we continue to follow public health guidance. We know the Delta variant is in our communities and the statistics show the number of overall daily new cases in Ontario is on an upward trend. This follows what we have seen in other countries, and most recently in the United States, who is in a definitive 4th wave of this pandemic. So, please do remain vigilant.

Another issue we have been dealing with this summer is the forest fires in the northwest that continue to challenge our communities, with evacuees being supported in a number of areas, including here in Thunder Bay. With that much fire and smoke, the hospital and others have been challenged with air quality issues. We had a Code Grey Precautionary Alert, which led us to review our policy and process recognizing the impact of forest fires on our organization today and in the future. That "Air Exclusion" policy was initially developed with consideration to different biological issues versus smoke due to fire. As such, a phasing of the Code implementation is being addressed to ensure that air quality is maintained in our facility while enabling the continuance of critical day-to-day operations.

Finally, in recognition of all of your amazing work and as a small gesture of gratitude, we have launched Kindness Carts across the organization beginning this week and continuing into September. Kindness Carts will be making department rounds on various days of the week and shift times in an effort to reach as many staff as possible. Thanks to the Foundation for the funding to support the special treats! The focus on the carts is "WELLNESS" and a touch base from your senior leaders to receive some feedback that will help us with Staff Experience planning, while reminding everyone of the resources available to support your personal health and wellbeing, such as our CARE team. (<https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/staff-wellness-resources/>).

Work related to healthy workplace, staff wellness, and engagement will continue through strategic plan action plans, focusing on Staff Experience. This kind of effort is pivotal to ensuring our success moving forward.

As always, I welcome comments on this blog or any other matter. You can reach me at: crockere@tbh.net.



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