



To: All Staff, Professional Staff, Learners and Volunteers

From: Jennifer Wintermans, VP, Quality and Corporate Affairs, COVID-19 Lead

Date: March 30, 2023

RE: **Transition of Pandemic Response Protocols – Phase 1**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have relied on guidance from Public Health and the Ministry of Health (MOH), and our protective measures have been geared to response levels. We are now entering a new phase of the pandemic as we see lower rates and less impact on our health care system. To align with MOH direction and other hospitals in the province, we are moving forward with transitioning many of our response activities into our operations to form a new normal.

The following outlines the areas that are part of our first phase of this transition that will take effect on **Saturday, April 1, 2023**.

1. Pandemic Response Levels

Our Hospital will be discontinuing the use of the internal Pandemic Response Levels and from here on in we will be basing any response activities on a *Normal State* – which will reflect our new normal day operations as of April 1, 2023 or a *Restricted State* – which will only be utilized if deemed necessary and identified by the current process with involvement from Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S), Infection Prevention and Control and Senior Leadership Council. A change to a Restricted State will allow us to exercise our need to reinstate a protective measure.

What does this mean?

As of April 1, 2023, we will no longer be using our Pandemic Response Levels (currently Orange – Restrict) and will move to a new Normal State.

2. Passive Screening for Staff, Professional Staff, Learners, Volunteers, Scientists, Researchers, Contractors and Vendors

As we enter our new Normal State on April 1, 2023, we will no longer require active screening, via the use of the [RedCap self-screening tool](#). The use of the RedCap self-screening tool will only be required for those experiencing symptoms, have an exposure, or test positive for COVID-19. This will flag OH&S to then work with you to follow COVID-19 protocols (i.e. staying home and booking a test).

What does this mean?

As of April 1, 2023, you do not need to complete the screening questionnaire before your shift or entry into our Hospital – either by submitting manually if you were not using the portal, or into the [RedCap portal](#). You still need to [self-monitor for symptoms](#) daily and **only** submit **if** you are experiencing symptoms, had an exposure or a positive test.

3. Essential Care Partner (ECP) and Care Partner (CP) Restrictions

We will no longer be using the ECP and CP Guidance document (version 13). The new *Essential Care Partner, and Care Partner Policy* outlines the protocols and number of ECPs and CPs allowed in both our In-Patient Units and Out-Patient Units.

What does this mean?

As of April 1, 2023, the following protocols will be applied to ECPs/CPs for Patients:

- Each inpatient will be able to identify up to 2 ECPs and 4 CPs at admission, which can be changed throughout the patient's stay. Two people may be present at the bedside at any given time.
- Patients who are palliative or at End-of-Life will have the ability to identify unlimited ECPs/CPs, with two people at the bedside at a time, unless special circumstances are made with approval from the unit Manager.
- In out-patient departments/programs, patients are encouraged to attend appointments alone, but are able to be accompanied by one ECP (with exceptions as needed with approval of department manager).

Please note that we will [no longer have Care Partner Liaisons](#) as of April 1, 2023, and any concerns needing attention outside the policy will be required to be addressed at the Unit Level or through the Patient Advocate by calling (807) 684-6211.

4. Points of Access and Entrance Screening

We will be continuing to limit access to our Hospital through the following:

- Main Entrance (6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.)
- Emergency Department for designated emergency
- Labour and Delivery doors for patients/ECPs
- Renal Doors for Renal Patients and CPs (6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.)

All other access points are locked and will require staff to swipe their Hospital ID badge to enter.

Passive entrance screening will now be conducted at these entrance points, supported by check-in stations with signage, hand sanitizer, and masks. As well, in order to mitigate risks that come with

this change, the Information Desk will be relocated to act as a check-in point for the public, alongside volunteer supports and increased visibility with security to assist as needed.

What does this mean?

As of April 1, 2023, you will no longer see the screening booths set up in the main entrance. Any person entering our Hospital will need to self-screen and not enter if they are symptomatic. [Signage](#), volunteers and security staff will support any questions and ensure people are familiar with the change and assist with ECP/CP questions or wayfinding.

What is NOT changing on April 1, 2023?

- **Masking:** Continues to be mandatory while in our Hospital unless eating or in a private office. This means that all Patients, ECPs/CPs, staff and any individual coming into our Hospital will need to wear a mask. There is no change with this protocol at this time.
- **Eye protection:** Mandatory eye protection is required only in patient care areas or clinical settings, and in circumstances where face to face contact occurs (less than 2 metres) with no structural shielding in place.
- **Testing all new admissions:** Remains status quo and continue to test with exceptions as previously approved (Mat/LD, Out-patient surgery, Endo).
- **In-person meetings:** In-person meetings are permitted onsite and should follow all required precautions including masking. In-person meetings should also include a virtual option when able to accommodate individuals who are unable to attend onsite.
- **Assessment Centre operations:** There is no change with the services at this time.

What is Next?

Senior Leadership Council will be reviewing Phase 2 of the Transition, which will include masking, eye protection, physical distancing and spacing, and COVID-19 pre-admission swabbing.

Thank you for your continuous cooperation and ability to adapt based on the needs of our patients, families and staff. For any questions regarding these changes, please ask your Manager.