



Renfrew County and District Health Unit  
*"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"*

## For Immediate Release

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(Pembroke, Ontario, 10:30 a.m., May 11, 2021)

### **Renfrew County Hospitals Remain Open and Safe For All Who Need Care**

Despite increased numbers in hospitalizations for COVID-positive patients in Renfrew County and District (RCD), strict safety procedures are ensuring that our region's hospitals remain safe for all who need hospital-based health care.

"Throughout the pandemic, COVID-19 has caused some serious delays in the treatment of other urgent medical problems, primarily out of fear of the virus and concern that other patients may be at risk if they attend hospitals that have COVID-positive patients in their care," said Dr. Rob Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health for the Renfrew County and District Health Unit.

Dr. Cushman explained that hospitalized COVID-positive patients in RCD are either admitted to a dedicated COVID unit at the Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH) or they are transferred to an Ottawa hospital for additional ICU (Intensive Care Unit) treatment.

"Occasionally, the other hospitals in RCD treat a new COVID-positive case in the Emergency Department prior to transferring the patient to PRH or Ottawa, or less often, a patient being transferred back from Ottawa to one in RCD turns out to be positive. In all of these situations, the patients are appropriately isolated, extensive testing is done on staff and patients who might be at risk, and COVID cleaning practices are enacted," he said.

Dr. Tom Hurley, Chief of Staff at PRH said all hospitals in RCD, including PRH have taken every precaution to not only reduce the spread of COVID-19 but also to ensure the health and safety of patients and staff.

In all of the region's hospitals, patients are screened upon entry and those presenting with COVID-19 symptoms are rapidly segregated and provided with appropriate protective equipment such as masks. As a result, the risk of contracting COVID-19 through an emergency department visit or an appointment in another part of the hospital is minimal.

“Time is of the essence when treating many serious medical conditions so now is not the time to ignore symptoms or hesitate if you feel it's an emergency or something that needs to be checked further. A delay in seeking care could have a lasting impact on your outcome, with patients potentially suffering serious complications if they don't seek timely care,” Dr. Hurley said.

As COVID-19 continues to dominate the news, it can be easy to forget that heart attacks, strokes and all kinds of other medical emergencies are still happening every day. In the case of major strokes or heart attacks, for example, patients need to be treated within a few hours of developing symptoms in order to avoid permanent damage, disability, or death.

Those who are unsure if their non-life-threatening condition or symptom requires a trip to the hospital are encouraged to connect with their family physician. If they don't have a primary care provider or cannot reach their own doctor, they can contact the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (VTAC) at 1-844-727-6404.

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