

Community Connection



Pembroke Regional Hospital Spring 2021 Edition



Phone (613) 732-2811 Email/Version Françaises Disponibles au pr@prh.email
Website pembrokeregionalhospital.ca / Facebook pembrokeregionalhospital / Twitter @PRHhospital

PRH President And CEO Expresses Praise For Partnerships And Work Being Done



Pierre Noel

As we head into a second spring under the cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic I, like all of you, am anxious to be on the other side of this and filled with hope that vaccines will help control the spread of the virus and enable us to resume some of the pre-COVID activities that we all enjoyed and miss so much.

However, until widespread vaccinations can have their intended effect, we know that we must remain vigilant in the weeks and months ahead in order to protect those most vulnerable in our community. Keeping protective measures up is a challenge but it is our best defence as we face new variants of the virus and delays in receiving the vaccine doses we require.

While local demand for the vaccine is high and people are anxious to get their shot, we are currently not able to operate our local vaccine clinics as often as we would like. We have been limited in scheduling clinics and can only do so

based on the weekly allocations of vaccine that arrive in Renfrew County. For this reason we continue to ask for your patience and to monitor local media channels and the Renfrew County and District Health Unit's website for local updates. In the mean time, we can assure you that if you wish to receive a vaccine your time will come.

Gratitude For Our Partners

Throughout this edition of our public newsletter, you will see mention of many partnerships that we are proud to be apart of and, while not all of them noted are COVID-related, they are all important to peoples' health. One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been the recognition that we need to work even more closely together in order to achieve great things. Our partnerships and collaborative efforts have allowed us to do things quickly, efficiently and safely, all while working within the constraints and COVID safety measures in place.

One local partnership that is not highlighted specifically in this issue but deserves continued acknowledgement is the work of the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre

(VTAC). Launched one year ago to keep our communities safe and healthy and to protect our emergency departments, VTAC in the past year has administered almost 42,000 COVID-19 tests, completed more than 20,000 virtual family physician assessments for patients without a family physician or for those who couldn't reach their family physicians, and provided 4,700 in home assessments by community paramedics.

Having this innovative and collaborative approach in place has been a huge help to our hospital and to our community. In other regions, hospitals have been tasked with setting up and staffing COVID testing centres and have been challenged to provide the level of access and timeliness that we have experienced here. Well done VTAC!

Helping Other Hospitals

The slow down that was experienced at the beginning of the pandemic created a backlog of patients waiting for services, including diagnostic services such as CT and MRI.

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Incredible Team Effort Yields Successful Vaccination Clinics At PMC



With regular weekly shipments of the COVID-19 vaccine en route to Renfrew County, the Pembroke Regional Hospital is reassuring residents that everyone who wishes to receive a vaccine will have an opportunity get it in the coming weeks and months based on the province's eligibility guidelines.

While the hospital's onsite vaccination clinics, under leadership from public health, began February 24th with 200-300 people booked in each date, preparations for the broader distribution of the vaccine and a ramp up to 600-1,000 vaccination bookings per clinic resulted in the hospital's move to the Pembroke Memorial Centre (PMC) in mid-March.



Sabine Mersmann

"The clinics held to date have been a tremendous success thanks to the efforts of all those involved who have worked very hard to ensure the clinics are safe, efficient and effective," said Sabine Mersmann, PRH Senior Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services – Partnerships and Integration, adding that Renfrew County's other hospitals have also been doing the same in their communities.

Those involved on the frontlines and behind-the-scenes at the PMC include many local physicians who have provided expert medical oversight...

Continued on Page 2

For The Latest COVID-19 And COVID-19 Vaccine Information Please Visit:

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit
www.rcdhu.com

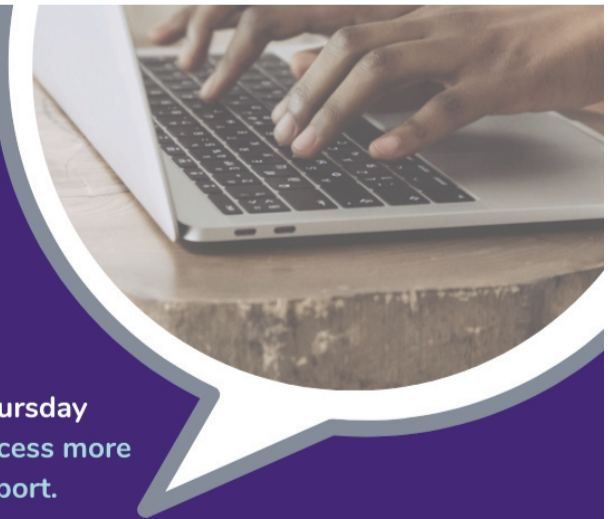
Government of Ontario
www.ontario.ca

Please note that an online vaccine booking system for eligible residents is now available at:
www.rcdhu.com or Ontario.ca/bookvaccine
Those unable to book online can call (613) 735-9724, ext. 200.

NOW LAUNCHED:

THE RENFREW COUNTY COLLABORATIVE E-WALK-IN COUNSELLING CLINIC. ACCESS FREE, SAME-DAY MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION THERAPY BY VIDEO OR PHONE.

Call 1-844-411-0981 every Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. to access more immediate and convenient support.



Team Effort...Continued From Page 1

...the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service, the Pembroke Fire Department, community volunteers, PRH retirees, a number of the hospital's current staff and management team, the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, Algonquin College, Mulvihill Drug Mart, the West Champlain Family Health Centre, Canadian Red Cross, the Petawawa Centennial Family Health Centre, McKie Pools and Spas, Carefor Transportation and many others who have stepped up to provide assistance.

Ms. Mersmann added that the City of Pembroke has also provided a great deal of assistance in helping facilitate the use of the PMC for the clinics.

For the latest information on vaccine eligibility, vaccine clinics, how to register for an appointment, Frequently Asked Questions and more, visit the Renfrew County and District Health Unit website at www.rcdhu.com.



Local Team Working To Improve County's Health And Social Service Care

The Ontario government is changing the way health care is organized in our province so that it is more patient-centred and efficient. To do this, the government has asked the people and groups who provide health and social service care in Ontario to start working together in Health Teams.

Our area, currently referred to as "Network 24", is working on an application to become an Ontario Health Team (OHT). The name "Network 24" was given to our area by the Ontario Ministry of Health, but when this process is complete and our Health Team is formed, we hope to select a new name.

Network 24 stretches from the Ottawa Valley north of Arnprior, up to Deep River and includes the area along Highway 60 to South Algonquin Township.

The team working for Network 24 includes representatives such as patients, residents, and families, as well as groups such as:

- all hospitals;
- family health teams and community health centres;
- agencies that provide homecare, community care and social services support;
- agencies that provide mental health and addictions care;
- agencies that provide palliative care;
- agencies that provide long-

term care.

Development of the Network 24 Ontario Health Team is in the early stages, but when complete, it is hoped that it will be easier for people to get the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

For the first year of planning, the Network 24 team may explore ways to address the following:

1. How to help keep seniors in their own homes with the care and supports they need.
2. Finding ways to ensure everyone has equal access to a primary care provider (a physician or a Nurse Practitioner).
3. An assessment of mental health and addictions services, especially in light of impacts of the ongoing pandemic.

In order for Network 24 to become an Ontario Health Team, a formal application process must be completed. So far, a self-assessment form has been submitted and reviewed by the Ontario Ministry of Health. The team is now working towards the completion of a full application, to be submitted by April 30th. Pending approval of the application, the Ontario government will conduct an in-person assessment to decide if Network 24 is fully ready to become an Ontario Health Team. It is expected that the application review process will take several months.

Pierre Noel Expresses Praise ...Continued From Front Page

To help address this backlog, our Diagnostic Imaging Department was allocated funding for an additional 1,000 hours of MRI time and an additional 362 hours of CT time. These additional resources were put to good use and we have been able to meet the needs of many additional patients and have helped reduce the regional MRI backlog by 46%. In order to achieve this, we worked closely with The Ottawa Hospital and the Queensway-Carleton Hospital to accept and provide services for patients from Ottawa who had been waiting extraordinarily long times for diagnostic testing. While accommodating these Ottawa patients, we have also been able to maintain 100% of our own CT wait times within the provincial targets. We are very proud to have been able to help out our region in this way.

Service Delivery Has Returned To Pre-Pandemic Levels

Overall, we have now successfully returned to our pre-COVID volumes in most of our programs and services. While much of this care has returned via face-to-face visits, access for some services remains in a virtual or hybrid format (a mix of in-person and virtual/phone-based appointments). We and our patients have even found that this mode of delivery has actually turned out to be preferable in certain circumstances. As a result, we anticipate that some services may maintain a virtual or hybrid delivery model when the pandemic ends.

Better Days Ahead

As we navigate this "third wave" of the pandemic, I take comfort in the knowledge that there is light ahead in the tunnel. With more and more vaccines coming and with all of you doing your part...distancing, masking, hand washing and staying home when you are sick, we will see this through.

Remember, our hospital continues to be a safe place to be if you need care. We take every precaution to ensure that those who need to come to the hospital or need urgent care in our emergency department can do so safely. Have confidence in your local health system and remain hopeful that there are indeed better days ahead.

IF YOU HAVE A HEALTH CONCERN

AND DO NOT HAVE A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER
OR CAN'T ACCESS YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

CONTACT US 24/7 **1-844-727-6404**
www.rcvtac.ca

MUST HAVE VALID OHIP CARD

RCVTAC

RENFREW COUNTY

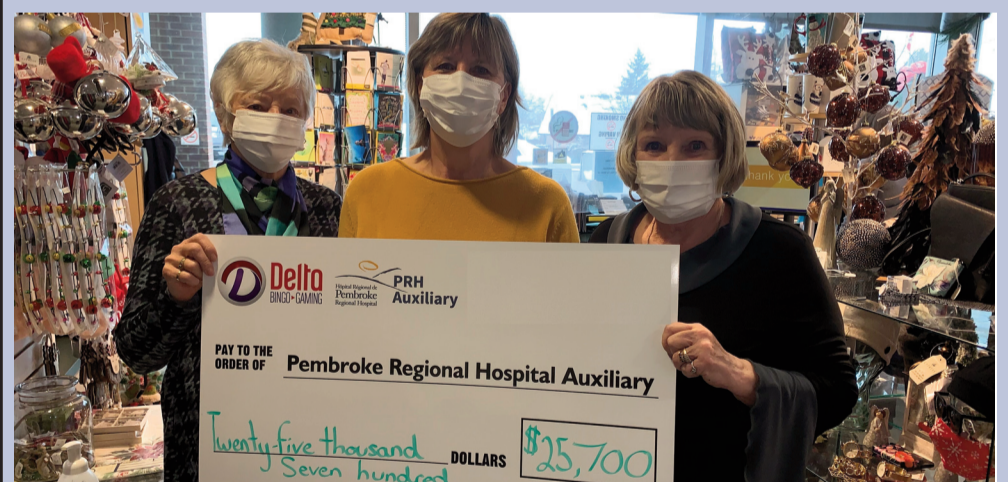
Virtual Triage & Assessment Centre

FAMILY PHYSICIAN

NURSE PRACTITIONER

COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC

Auxiliary Continues To Benefit From Bingo



Gratitude is extended to Pembroke's Delta Bingo and Gaming for continuing to provide charitable contributions to our Auxiliary despite the pandemic. Pre-COVID, four volunteers regularly assisted each Tuesday at bingo events and will return to this role once they are able. The Auxiliary recently received a donation of \$25,700 for 2019/2020 which the Auxiliary in turn contributes to the hospital for its current equipment needs.

Pictured here are Auxiliary members Heather Levasseur, Brenda Long and Diana Gagne.

Paid Parking Improvements Coming Soon

A new, more modern parking system will soon be installed at PRH. This parking system upgrade offers a number of new features including: contactless debit and credit card payment with tap, WAVE technology for contactless ticket entry and upgraded intercoms which will improve communication and remote assistance.

The parking lots will remain open during the installation.



NEED A COVID-19 TEST? HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

STEP 1 COMPLETE THE COVID-19 SELF-ASSESSMENT

STEP 2 BASED ON RESULTS, DETERMINE IF A TEST IS REQUIRED

STEP 3 IF A TEST IS REQUIRED, CALL RC VTAC AT 1-844-727-6404 TO BOOK A TEST TIME (DROP-INS ARE NO LONGER ACCOMMODATED)

STEP 4 ARRIVE AT YOUR SCHEDULED TIME WEAR A MASK BRING YOUR HEALTH CARD & PROOF OF ADDRESS



Consider Joining Our *Monthly Giving Club* By Filling Out The Form At The Bottom Of This Page

Many thanks to our Community for the success of the 2021 Connect to Care Radiothon



Together, we raised **\$49,400** for the Cancer Care Campaign

2021 Event Sponsors

FRANK CARROLL FINANCIAL, OK TIRE, Lindsey Cupelli The Mortgage Advisors, BENNETT ELECTRIC

2021 Community Ambassadors

Scotiabank, Mike's Hardware, Laurentian, Lavallec Health Centre, Rowan's PHARMASAVE, CENTURY 21, Physio Valley, nofrills, Downtown Pembroke, John A. Butler Photography, Jill Clark, Peter Boczar, Chris Pleau, Randy McRae, Alex Podiluk

Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation



Fondation de l'Hôpital Régional de Pembroke

Health Care Together



www.prhfoundation.com



Cancer Care Campaign

Your Help is Needed

In 2020, over 170 cancer patients made more than 1,060 visits to our hospital to receive much-needed treatment. We need your help so that every cancer patient has access to state-of-the-art equipment, leaving them and their families with one less worry.

The Cancer Care Campaign Goal: \$1.65M

Chemotherapy and Sterile room:	\$760,000
Medical Daycare units & costs:	\$652,550
New Furnishing & Equipment Costs:	\$237,450
Total Fundraising Goal:	\$1.65M

A Cancer Care Story

"I've had three 'encounters' with breast cancer during my 92 years and one with bladder cancer. My most recent diagnosis was in 2009 where it was determined that the cancer had metastasized into the wall of my sternum and was 4th stage. I have been taking chemotherapy every three weeks and have just completed my 100th treatment! The treatment has kept me alive much longer than predicted.

My early treatments were at the Queensway-Carleton Cancer Centre and later I was able to transfer to Pembroke's Chemotherapy Clinic. I was very happy to be able to make this move to avoid all the travel and long day trips which were exhausting and involved a lot of travelling in poor conditions.

The atmosphere at the clinic here is so warm and welcoming. The nurses are very special, extremely competent, cheerful and always offer warm blankets and a little snack if you happen to be there over lunch. They certainly brighten up my day every three weeks and I can never thank them enough. I also get to see my oncologist via telemedicine which is also convenient. We're very fortunate to have the opportunity to receive cancer treatment right here at the PRH. With continued treatment, I hope to see my 100th birthday! - Doris Siegel

Draws every Wednesday at 10:00 AM

Live on our Facebook Page

Good luck !

www.PRHcatchtheace.ca

Launching in MAY !

Spring Lottery for Healthcare! Support the Hospital and our Cancer Care Campaign for a chance to win great prizes!

www.PRHspringlotto.ca

SPRING LOTTO PRIZES

The Spring Lottery top prize is a 2021 Princecraft Pontoon Boat, motor, and trailer.

Early Bird Prize #1 is a Family Fitness Package including 2 adult bikes & 2 kids' bikes and accessories. Early Bird Prize #2 is a 4 Wheeler Package. including a 4 wheeler & accessories!

YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT THE Cancer Care Campaign

Please complete this donation form and return it with an enclosed payment, if applicable, to **Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation at 705 Mackay St, Pembroke, ON, K8A 1G8**. A tax receipt will be issued for gifts of \$10 or more. Charitable Registration No. 870047610RR0001

DONOR INFORMATION

Donor Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

*Providing your email helps us to keep costs low with electronic receipting

One-time donation of Recurring monthly donation of

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 prefer to give \$ _____

I wish to pay by:

Cash Visa MasterCard American Express

Cheque (payable to Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation)

Card #: _____

Expiry: ____/____ Signature: _____

For more information on the Monthly Giving Club or the Cancer Care Campaign please contact us at (613)732-2811 extension 7408 or email foundation@prh.email. Visit www.PRHfoundation.com to make an electronic donation.

Eastern Ontario Organizations Partner To Simplify Access To Mental Health, Substance Use And Addictions Services

One of the biggest challenges for people seeking mental health, substance use, and/or addictions services is knowing where to turn for help.

In response, people with lived and living expertise, healthcare organizations, and community service providers have teamed up to create, a new single point of entry into eastern Ontario's system of care for mental health, substance use and addictions.

Here's how it works: Anyone who is 16 years of age or older can fill out a form at AccessMHA.ca and book a time for a confidential conversation with a mental health and addictions professional. That professional will work with the client to assess their needs and goals, then connect them to the service that is the best fit for them from a network of partner organizations across the community. Services might include individual and group counselling, psychotherapy, psychiatric consultation, substance treatment programs, or peer support.

AccessMHA has been created by the Partners for Regional Coordinated Access for Mental Health and Addictions (RCA), which includes people with lived and living experience as well as many community and health organizations throughout eastern Ontario.

Gord Garner, vice president of strategic partnerships at Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CAPSA) and co-chair of the RCA Client and Family Advisory Committee, describes the typical pathway to care as an

"incredibly complex, undiscoverable pathway for many people."

"The people who are suffering, or concerned for a loved one, want to know more than anything else that they're not mistaken about their hopes for help," says Garner, who is also a member of the RCA oversight committee. "When they can't access help, or they're told they are at the wrong place, or that they don't qualify for this help, it may take them decades to come back seeking help again."



AccessMHA seeks to address this issue by providing simple, equitable access to all people and their supporters who need mental health and/or substance use/addiction services across the region.

"It takes a lot of courage to reach out for help. We need to make sure that when people are reaching out, that they know where to go and that they're confident there is help out there. We can help get them connected to that and give them hope," says Dr. Kim Corace, vice-president of innovation and transformation at The Royal.

AccessMHA was designed so that people can

get the help they need, when they need it.

"With so many organizations offering various mental health and addiction services, it can be very confusing for those in need to know where to turn or who to call," says Mireille Delorme, director of Mental Health Services of Renfrew County – a program administered by the Pembroke Regional Hospital.

"AccessMHA will help take away the guesswork for those seeking care for themselves, or others. Mental Health Services of Renfrew County is excited to become a part of AccessMHA as we work together with other providers to promote all mental health and addiction services and help those in need find the right fit for them in a timely and compassionate manner."

Although the primary mission of AccessMHA is to draw a clear path for individuals who are reaching out for help, AccessMHA can also help to shorten wait times and wait lists for mental health, substance use and addictions services in general. Rather than waiting on multiple lists in the search for a service that fits their needs, individuals can work with AccessMHA to find the right service.

AccessMHA is intended for anyone over 16 who lives in: Ottawa; Pembroke; Cornwall; Hawkesbury, and surrounding areas including Lanark, Leeds and Grenville; Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry; Prescott-Russell; and Renfrew. Family doctors or other health care providers can also submit a referral on a client's behalf.

Pembroke Regional Hospital Is Doing Its Part To Prevent Falls

Are you at risk of falling? Recognizing that falls are the leading cause of injury and hospitalization among older adults in Canada, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has implemented use of a new fall risk screening checklist. Patients aged 65 and older who visit the Emergency Department or have appointments in Diagnostic Imaging and in the clinics can expect to receive the Stop Falls – Staying Independent Checklist which they will be asked to complete in order to assess their risk of falling.



Beth Brownlee

The checklist, which patients will be asked to fill out while they wait for their appointments, consists of a self-assessment questionnaire. Their results will be reviewed with a member of the health care team while they are at the hospital and if they are deemed to be at risk for falls they will be asked to share the assessment with their primary care physician and continue the conversation.

"Anyone can fall, but as we age our risk of falling becomes greater," said Beth Brownlee, Director of Surgical, Medical and Maternal Child Care programs at PRH.

"Falls can result in fracture, chronic

pain, reduced mobility, loss of independence and death in some cases so it's important to do all we can to help prevent them. Statistics show that 50% of all falls causing hospitalization happen at home and 20-30% of older Canadians experience at least one fall per year so we are using this tool as a preventive measure to try and reduce the risk for our patients," Ms. Brownlee said, adding that 95% of hip fractures are the result of falls.

"We would like to see people revisit the checklist regularly, or at least on an annual basis, especially when there has been a change in their condition, a change in their medications, or a change in their living environment," said Laurie Menard, Director of Diagnostic Imaging, Emergency Department/Intensive Care Unit and Ambulatory Clinics at PRH.

"Any of these changes can cause a dramatic increase in the risk of falling. We encourage everyone at risk to speak with members of their health care team to not only look at ways to prevent falls, but strategies to reduce the risk of injury should they experience a fall."

For those interested in completing the checklist at home or having family members review it, the checklist and other information about fall prevention can be found online at:

<https://www.rgpeo.com/stop-falls/patient-families/>



Pharmacy Team Celebrates Arrival Of State-Of-The-Art Equipment



Our Pharmacy department recently celebrated the arrival of state-of-the-art equipment that individually packages and verifies "stock" medication for our clinical units. "Stock" medication includes those that are regularly used such as Tylenol.

Prior to having these new pieces of technology, Pharmacy staff had to create specific labels for each "stock" medication and then manually count the tablets, bottle them and deliver them to each unit.

The new PACMed machine now packages each pill individually printing the required information on each pouch while the PACVision verifies that the correct medication is in the pouch and matches the label so that the medication can be delivered to the unit.

As of early March, all "stock" medication was being distributed in this manner. Over time, it is anticipated that other medications will be added.

Both machines represent a total investment of approximately \$325,000.

PRH Recognized For Commitment To Organ and Tissue Donation Program



Once again, our hospital was recognized by the Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN), Ontario's organ and tissue donation and transplantation agency, for its outstanding efforts to integrate organ and tissue donation into quality end-of-life care. PRH was one of 29 hospitals to receive the Provincial Conversion Rate Award for meeting or exceeding the target conversion rate of 63 per cent set by the Trillium Gift of Life Network in 2019/2020. The conversion rate is the percentage of potential organ donors who went on to become actual donors. This is the second time our hospital has received this award.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE* ANY COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?

UPDATED - Guidance on Testing and Isolation. Effective - February 22, 2021

SYMPTOMATIC PERSON

1. ANY person (adult or child) with ANY COVID-19 symptoms (even if it is just one symptom) must self isolate AND get tested.
2. The person with symptoms can go back to school/work when they receive a negative test result AND their symptoms are improving AND they have not had a fever (without medication) for 24 hours.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

1. Household members must also self-isolate but do not need testing if they do not have any symptoms.
2. Household members can go back to school/work when the person with symptoms has received a negative result.

⚠️ The guidance on testing and isolation has changed due to the concern about COVID-19 variants that are more transmissible AND spreading in our communities.

⚠️ If the symptomatic individual does not get tested for COVID-19, then all members of the household must quarantine for 14 days from their last contact with the symptomatic individual.

⚠️ A doctor's note IS NOT required for return to work/school, once the above criteria have been met.

✳️ The most up to date information can be found online at RCDHU.COM

In Partnership with Primary Care, Community Paramedics, Public Health, Hospitals, and Ontario Health East

GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 HIGH-RISK CONTACTS

UPDATED Guidance on Testing and Isolation. March 10, 2021

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M A HIGH-RISK CONTACT?

- Public Health has advised you through contact tracing (via a phone call or text message).
- School (with direction from Public Health) has confirmed you and/or your child is a high-risk contact.
- The COVID Alert App has informed you.

I'M A HIGH-RISK CONTACT. WHAT NEXT?

You must self-isolate and self-monitor for 14 days from your last close contact with the person who has COVID-19. Do not leave your home or return to work or school in-person and make your best effort to self-isolate from your household (i.e. separate space, wear a mask).

- Get tested.
- If test result is negative, continue 14 day isolation. You may require a second test on or after day 10.
- If test result is positive, continue self-isolation and you will be contacted by Public Health.

I SHARE A HOUSEHOLD WITH A HIGH-RISK CONTACT. WHAT NEXT?

You do not need to self-isolate UNLESS you are unable to isolate away from the high-risk contact OR the high-risk contact is sick. However, you should stay home except for essential reasons (i.e. work, school, essential errands).

- If the high-risk contact is sick and self-isolating away from you, you must self-isolate until the high-risk contact receives a negative test result.
- If the high-risk contact cannot self-isolate within the home, you must also self-isolate during the full isolation period.

CALL 1-844-727-6404 TO BOOK YOUR COVID-19 TEST.

PRH Surgical Team Is Making Strides As Part Of Opioid Reduction Initiative

As part of a province-wide opioid reduction initiative, the Pembroke Regional Hospital's Surgical team prescribed nearly 10,000 less pills to patients over a one year period that ended in April 2020, representing a 20% decrease in opioid prescriptions.

PRH is one of 47 hospitals in Ontario who took part in the *Cut the Count* campaign as a member of the Ontario Surgical Quality Improvement Network supported by Health Quality Ontario. These hospitals are responsible for almost 80% of the surgical operations that take place in the province annually.

Prescribing fewer opioids to surgical patients at discharge, while helping patients manage their pain effectively in other ways was the campaign aim so that fewer opioids would end up being improperly disposed and to help reduce addiction and overdose rates in the community.

Dr. Amanda Williamson

“As many patients require drugs to help deal with pain as they recover from a procedure, opioids have traditionally been the go-to class of medications for controlling pain after surgery,” said Michelle Godsell, Surgical program Manager at PRH.

Physician lead Dr. Amanda Williamson explained that the initiative was a collaborative effort among the surgeon team.

“Previously there was no consistency in prescribing practices with each surgeon having their own way of doing it. As a result of this campaign, the prescribing practice has become standardized,” Dr. Williamson said.

She noted that education was a huge part of the campaign – not only education for nurses and physicians, but also for patients.

“Patients should expect to have pain after a surgical procedure. Our goal is to ensure their pain is tolerable or manageable – not eliminated altogether. Some of the opioid reduction strategies we implemented were alternative methods for pain control that allow patients to resume activities of daily living,” Dr. Williamson said, adding that this could be through the use of non-narcotic anti-inflammatory medication, acetaminophen, and other non-pharmaceutical options such as the use of heat and ice.

In addition to developing common prescriptions used by the surgeon group, they were also recognized for their reduction initiatives which included revised patient education sheets, changes in pre and post-operative teaching, and the use of more regional techniques for anaesthesia that result in less pain.

“Patient education was also standardized. Previous to the initiative, patients were receiving pain management education 40% of the time. They now receive it 97% of the time and patients receive a call 30 days post-op to assess the initiative implementation and get feedback on the patient experience,” Dr. Williamson said.

Each of these improvements have not only resulted in a better outcome for the patients, but also the reality is we are seeing less opioids in circulation which is a huge step in the right direction, she said.

PRH Stroke Prevention Clinic, A County-Wide Service, Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Lisa Keon, left, Dr. Debbie Timpson and Karen Schaffel.

March 14th marked the 10th anniversary of Pembroke Regional Hospital's Stroke Prevention Clinic (SPC).

All Renfrew County emergency departments and family physicians, as well as specialists in Renfrew County and Ottawa can refer their patients to this county-wide service. The mandate of this county-wide outpatient clinic is to urgently assess patients who have experienced signs and symptoms of a recent stroke or TIA (transient ischemic attack). The goal of the clinic is to reduce the incidence of future strokes by initiating timely assessment and treatment in order to prevent a subsequent stroke.

The SPC nurse specialist, Lisa Keon, RN, and medical lead, Dr. Debbie Timpson, have worked in the clinic since its inception. Karen Schaffel, the SPC clerk, is the newest addition to the team. With excellent support from our Diagnostic Imaging department, appropriate imaging is expedited. This information, along with a thorough patient history and neurologic exam, is used to confirm the stroke or TIA diagnosis.

The team works diligently to ensure that care is provided in a timely, compassionate manner and follows the Canadian Best Practice

Recommendations for Stroke. When a diagnosis is made, secondary prevention is initiated, which may include prescribing a new medication and/or education on risk factor modifications. There are a variety of stroke risk factors related to diet, exercise, tobacco or alcohol use, hypertension, and other hereditary factors. Patients are also educated about calling 911 and seeking immediate medical attention if they do experience any of the warning signs of stroke.

In addition, if a patient presents with signs of stroke and after being assessed and it is determined to be a “stroke mimic” (i.e. migraine, tumour, multiple sclerosis) then appropriate recommendations are provided.

The clinic has grown over the years and to date, more than 1300 patients have been assessed and more than 500 more have received follow up appointments.

The clinic is located in Tower D, Ground floor.
 Phone: (613) 732-2811, extension 6640 / Fax: (613) 732-6350.
 Hours of operation are Mon-Wed 0800-1600 and Thurs-Fri 0800-1200.

Stroke and TIA are a medical emergency!

Learn and recognize and respond immediately to any of these signs of stroke. Call 9-1-1 even if your symptoms go away.

Face is it drooping?
Arms can you raise both?
Speech is it slurred or jumbled?
Time to call 9-1-1 right away.

A Few Early Images From Our COVID-19 Vaccination Journey



Virtual Mental Health And Addiction Walk-In Counselling Clinic Launches In Renfrew County

Renfrew County residents often face a long wait time when they need to access mental health and addiction counselling. In response, the Renfrew County Collaborative E-Walk-In Counselling Clinic (WICC) has launched to provide children, youth, adults, and families with free, same-day access to single-session therapy by video or phone.

The WICC is the expansion of a service model started in Ottawa under the leadership of Jewish Family Services and funded by the Ontario government through the Champlain Local Health Integration Network. The Renfrew County expansion has been partially funded by the Renfrew County United Way and is a regional collaboration bringing together multiple Renfrew County healthcare providers and agencies that are sharing mental health and addiction resources to better support the immediate needs of residents.

“The ‘silver lining’ in this pandemic is that we are collaborating more and tapping into virtual counselling to increase access to therapy - in a way not attempted before,” said Mireille Delorme, Director for Mental Health Services of Renfrew County, a program operated by the Pembroke Regional Hospital. “The booking system for the new clinic was developed collectively by the region’s mental health and addiction health care providers, drawing from existing therapy resources not easily accessed on an in-person basis because of COVID restrictions. This model really helps us make the most of our counselling and therapy potential for the common good.”

“Collectively, we are helping to address the mental health and addiction service gap by offering more immediate, convenient, single counselling sessions that provide many individuals with the initial support and coping strategies they need,” said Karen Simpson, WICC co-lead and Executive Director, Arnprior & District Family Health Team.

Although the WICC is focused on single-

session therapy, individuals may return to access the services at any time, even while they are on a wait list for other mental health and addiction services.

Occupational Therapist Victoria Twolan who is part of the Mental Health Services team at PRH said the clinic, since launching, has been going very well, with bookings increasing as news of the new service spreads.

“Providing therapy ‘in the moment’ when it is needed the most may help to prevent some visits to local emergency departments,” Ms. Twolan said. “I have also noticed that this service, for some, provides an introduction to therapy and the potential benefit it can provide in the long term,” she said, adding that therapists in the County are now connecting and learning from each other about the breadth of services that are available which will ultimately benefit those in need.

“I feel this will be seen as a valuable service that is being offered,” said Sandi Wright, Supervisor of Mental Health, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation. “It will be a great way to reach people

without a wait and get immediate service. We are looking forward to working with the entire mainstream community - it has been one of our goals to be seen as a collective within the community.”

The WICC recognizes, welcomes and accepts the diversity of all clients and their families. The WICC partners include: Arnprior & District Family Health Team, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, Deep River and District Hospital, Madawaska Valley Family Health Team, Mental Health Services of Renfrew County (Pembroke Regional Hospital), Pathways Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services, Petawawa Centennial Family Health Centre, The Phoenix Centre for Children and Families, West Champlain Family Health Team, White Water Bromley Community Health Centre, and the Renfrew Victoria Hospital.

The WICC is currently open every Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Individuals who need same-day support, can call 1-844-441-0981.

The receptionist will ask a series of questions to help match the person with the right counsellor and book a session time for that day by video or phone (based on the client’s preference).

To ensure immediate access to mental health and addiction services outside of operating hours, clients can access Counselling Connect online at www.counsellingconnect.org.

Outpatients And Visitors: Things You Need To Know

As a part of our commitment to quality care and patient safety, there are a few things you need to know before you visit.

Please note that, given the current situation, all information contained in this section is subject to change. Please visit pembrokeregionalhospital.ca or check with a member of our health care team for the most up-to-date information.

Hospital Access

Access to our hospital for patients remains restricted to four public entrances: Emergency Department (24/7), Tower B (7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.), Tower C (7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.) and Tower D (7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). Please follow the signage posted onsite and be prepared to be screened on arrival for symptoms, travel history and contact history.

Use of Masks

As a safety measure for our patients, staff and visitors, everyone entering the hospital will be provided with a hospital-grade procedure mask to be worn at all times while inside the hospital, including while in patient rooms.

Visitor Policy

Currently, Family Caregivers/Care Partners only are welcome 24/7. Each patient can identify one Caregiver/Care Partner who will receive a badge to permit entry and visitation for the duration of the patient’s stay. For each visit, the Caregiver/Care Partner will be expected to show their badge at the screening station as identification for entry. An instruction sheet will be given out to all Caregivers/Care Partners when they receive their badge.

For patients who are nearing end of life, a maximum of four Family Caregivers/Care Partners will be permitted and will receive a badge.

In addition, patients may have a visit from their clergy/faith leader if the request for this visit has been approved by the Spiritual Care Coordinator and they have passed the screening at the hospital entrance.

The Lunch Box (cafeteria)

Due to COVID safety measures, our cafeteria remains closed to patients and visitors, however, the Auxiliary’s Mural Café (Ground Floor, Tower B) is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends. It’s closed on holidays. Vending options are also available in the Emergency Department waiting area (debit/credit only).