

Lindsay hospital prepared for COVID-19 surge

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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, Ross Memorial Hospital's leaders, physicians and staff remain hopeful that efforts to 'flatten the curve' have been successful.

A number of plans have been put in place already to address the pandemic hitting the Kawartha Lakes.

The COVID-19 Assessment Centre continues to provide assessments over the phone, and referral for further assessment and testing if needed. The assessment team has provided 1,607 assessments and 434 tests since first opening on March 15. Positive cases continue to be reported on the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit's website (www.hkpr.on.ca).

According to communications and public affairs officer Amanda Carvalho, with the recent increase in testing capacity in Ontario, the Lindsay hospital is now sending tests daily to Kingston General Hospital's lab. Test results have consistently been received back within 24 to 48 hours. The backlog in tests throughout the province has reduced significantly. The provincial government has also launched a new, user-friendly online portal for the public to easily access their test results, available at ontario.ca/coronavirus.

The hospital has also established a dedicated unit for the care of patients with probable or positive COVID-19. As of Monday (April 6) there were three patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 receiving care at the hospital.

Through a concerted effort between government, community partners, patients and families, the Ross Memorial has been able to discharge many patients who do not require acute care, whether to home with community supports, long-term care or retirement residence.

"These efforts have resulted in 55 empty beds that are available for a potential increase in inpatient cases of COVID-19," states Carvalho. "If needed, the hospital is able to open an additional 48 beds by May, by repurposing several clinic spaces that are currently closed."

Should the demand exceed the in-hospital bed capacity, the hospital would implement plans - currently in development with community partners - to open an off-site care setting.

In the interim, hospital staff continue to urge the public to follow the advice of government and public health officials by staying home. Up-to-date information is available at ontario.ca/coronavirus. For information specific to the Ross Memorial visit rmh.org/covid-19.