



NEWS

Ontario hospitals to 'ramp down' non-emergency surgeries starting Monday

Hospitals facing 'extreme pressure' on critical care capacity: memo

By [Veronica Appia](#) [OurWindsor.Ca](#)

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Amid a rise in COVID-19 case numbers and hospitalizations, Ontario hospitals have been told to "ramp down" all elective surgeries starting Monday.

The direction came in a letter sent from Ontario Health CEO Matthew Anderson to hospital CEOs and primary care providers on April 8.

The memo states that Ontario is "facing mounting and extreme pressure on our critical care capacity," and as a result, Ontario Health is "instructing hospitals to ramp down all elective surgeries and non-emergent/non-urgent activities in order to preserve critical care and human resource capacity." This will come into effect April 12.

As of April 9, the province has reported 4,227 new COVID-19 cases and 18 deaths, bringing the seven-day average to 3,256 cases daily.

Anderson added that the ramp down will be monitored and deferred surgeries and procedures will resume as soon as safely possible.

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As well, he noted, the memo currently does not apply to the Northern Ontario Health Region, but "hospitals in this region should be prepared to ramp down quickly, in the near future, if requested to do so."

Pediatric specialty hospitals are also not advised to defer any procedures.

In response to the Ontario Health memo, the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) issued its own statement on April 9, supporting the decision to pause elective surgeries, citing the more than 500 Ontarians occupying intensive care units – the highest number since the start of the pandemic.

"I am sad that we have come to the point again where we have to delay care for patients who have been waiting too long already in order to try to ensure that no one dies because of a lack of acute care resources," OMA President Dr. Samantha Hill said.

Veronica Appia is a reporter with Torstar Corporation Community Brands, covering COVID-19 news across Ontario.

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