



NEWS

Ross Memorial Hospital in planning stages to increase ICU capacity

Lindsay hospital has postponed all elective and non-urgent surgeries requiring admission to help address extreme pressure on provincial critical care capacity

By [Catherine Whitnall](#) Kawartha Lakes This Week

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As the third wave of COVID-19 continues to surge across Ontario, hospitals are ramping down all non-essential surgeries and are transferring sick people across jurisdictions.

Following direction issued on April 8 by Ontario Health to help address extreme pressure on provincial critical care capacity, Ross Memorial Hospital joined other

hospitals in reducing non-urgent care. At this time, all elective and non-urgent surgeries requiring admission to hospital have been postponed.

“As COVID cases remain relatively low locally in comparison to other regions in the province, the hospital will continue to perform some outpatient surgeries, and endoscopy and outpatient clinics will also continue. The ability to maintain outpatient surgery and other outpatient services will be evaluated daily according to the availability of human resources,” said Ross Memorial Hospital president and CEO Kelly Isfan, adding all life-saving services and urgent care will continue.

The hospital will also continue to do its part to support the stability of critical health-care resources.

“RMH is committed to supporting the system-wide response to the pandemic to best of our ability. This includes working with our hospital partners and our partners in the Ontario Health East Region to facilitate patient transfers as they are directed,” said Isfan.

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As of April 16, the hospital has accepted nine patient transfers from Scarborough Health Network; seven COVID positive patients and two non-COVID positive patients. As of Monday (April 19), the hospital was reporting six COVID positive patients were admitted.

Isfan knows the low numbers can change dramatically.

In November, the hospital increased its ICU capacity and is in the “planning stages” to potentially increase it further, said Isfan. At this time, the hospital has not been requested to share staffing resources.

Isfan said daily testing at the hospital’s assessment centre has remained fairly steady with an average of 160 individuals tested daily during the first three months of 2021.

This, she said, does not include additional tests completed in the emergency department. Testing rates are also somewhat skewed by the number of front-line workers and health-care providers, essential caregivers and long-term-care home visitors who must be tested on a regular basis; in some instances, every three days.

Isfan added that spikes in daily averages are often attributed to local outbreaks — such as Caressant Care McLaughlin Road Nursing Home in Lindsay, where dozens of residents and staff members tested positive for the virus during the first two months of the year — and cases of COVID-19 within local schools.

Catherine Whitnall is a reporter with MyKawartha. She can be reached at cwhitnall@mykawartha.com. Follow her on [Twitter](#) and MyKawartha on [Facebook](#)

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