

Hospital re-opens services 'in a very careful way'

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importance of the coming few days.

The hospital is planning a phased approach in resuming normal hospital services, but that, in itself, creates a set of challenges that exhausted and stressed-out health care workers must face, Dr. MacLean pointed out.

"We will open in a very careful way," he said. "As we open the hospital to more services, we have to control the movement of those patients. That increases the issues around screening and staffing. It's a huge challenge, one faced by every hospital in the GTA, especially those with SARS patients."

Hospitals in the east end of the GTA, where the first outbreak began, are under more pressure; Markham Stouffville is under additional strain with the closures of nearby Scarborough Grace and York Central in Richmond Hill.

"We have to balance offering services with protection against the spread of the disease," Dr. MacLean said. "Our whole capacity is very fragile. Critical care across the GTA is at a very critical point."

He added if there is not a huge increase in cases, most hospitals should be able to cope as SARS patients recover and are discharged.

Meanwhile, the hospital's emergency department, which re-opened Wednesday after a three-day closure, is functioning normally, he said. The closure was needed to reassess risk factors after two staffers contracted the virus, despite the use of protective measures while treating SARS patients.



DR. JIM MACLEAN: Critical care across the GTA is at a very critical point, hospital president says.

Dr. MacLean said the hospital is missing its volunteers and again praised staff for their dedication under very trying circumstances. He advised patients who have scheduled appointments next week to call first, if they have not been contacted already and asked the community for their continued patience.

with files from the Torstar Network

The York Region SARS clinic, at 6824 Hwy. 7, at the Ninth Line in Markham, operates from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week. It will be closed Easter Sunday, April 20. If you are showing SARS symptoms that day — high fever, aches, dry cough — you're asked to go to the Scarborough SARS clinic at 2867 Ellesmere Road. If you have symptoms or questions, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or York Region's Health Connection, between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m. seven days a week, at 1-800-361-5653.

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Update on SARS at Markham Stouffville Hospital

April 19, 2003

Markham Stouffville Hospital Reopens Emergency Department

The voluntary closure of the Emergency Department ended on Wednesday, April 16, 2003. Over the past few weeks, MSH has cared for a large number of SARS and other acute care patients. This was a result of the closure of two neighbouring hospitals (York Central Hospital and Scarborough Grace Hospital) and from our proximity and collaboration with the York Region SARS Assessment Clinic located close to the Hospital.

Visitor restrictions remain in effect until further notice. Visitors will be permitted for immediate family of critically ill patients, parents of small children and partners of labouring women.

All persons will need to complete the symptom clearance evaluation for symptoms of SARS (SARS Screening). Visitors who do not pass the evaluation will be referred to the York Region SARS Assessment Clinic for follow up.

The Province is working with hospitals on guidelines for reopening hospital services. We are planning to resume services in a phased-in approach. We will keep you advised on our progress.

We are grateful and proud of the outstanding efforts of our staff and physicians and the continued support of our community during this difficult time.

If you have any questions, please contact the Hospital at 905-472-7000 or visit our website at www.msh.on.ca



Dr. James R. MacLean
President & CEO

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