

April 17, 2020

The risk of illness from COVID-19 is most significant for older adults. We continue to act out of an abundance of caution as our dedicated staff members provide the most compassionate care. Even with our best efforts, we are profoundly aware that leading healthcare authorities continue to warn that we are likely to see more Ontario cases emerge in the weeks ahead.

We recognize that many in our community are anxious in the face of this pandemic and are interested to learn more about what we are doing at Baycrest to keep everyone safe. We are sharing the following information about our infection prevention and contingency measures with you.

Infection Prevention and Control Measures and Testing Protocols

We have employed proven, preemptive measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on our campus. These include adhering to social/physical distancing, active screening, virus testing protocols, isolation procedures, the appropriate use of personal protective equipment, and restricting the number of essential visitors onto the campus.

Since the outset of COVID-19, Baycrest has had a consistent and structured approach to testing for exposure to the virus. Our testing strategy is developed by our Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) professionals and is consistent with best practices and principles based on symptomology and exposure risk. In advance of testing kits becoming available, we had proactively built a comprehensive plan based on updated Ministry and public health guidance. For several weeks now, our own onsite COVID-19 testing centre has supported staff testing, and we are collaborating with our laboratory partners to expand the testing of Baycrest staff, residents and patients. We are now conducting proactive, targeted testing of asymptomatic staff and clients as an additional preventative measure across our varied care settings (Apotex, Hospital and Terraces).

Baycrest has been a strong regional advocate for prioritizing testing in the long-term care and complex continuing care sectors at the COVID-19 Regional Planning tables. We are staying abreast of provincial best practices as the global understanding of COVID-19 continues to evolve.

Maintaining and Managing Staffing Levels

The ability for Baycrest to provide safe and quality services during the COVID-19 pandemic requires continuous planning and coordination of employee efforts across all programs. We are actively monitoring and managing staffing needs across our organization.

There are a number of strategies we are implementing to ensure that we continue to maintain our workforce during this time, and we are thankful to our committed and dedicated staff who are making this possible.

To support COVID-19 specific initiatives, Baycrest has increased recruitment of additional frontline healthcare workers and other roles to support our staffing complement. Baycrest is recruiting additional

RPNs, PSWs, Environmental Services Staff, Food Services Staff, Feeding Assistants to help with mealtimes in the Apotex and Hospital, and staff to actively screen at the entrances.

Also, as part of our contingency staffing, Baycrest has established a redeployment committee that reviews our staffing needs daily and assigns staff with the required skills to provide support campus-wide.

Our Role at the Provincial Table for Planning

As a leader in this sector, we have been called upon by the province to be part of the Health Ministry's enhanced response structure, led by Ontario Health. The province has brought together hospitals, emergency health services, nurses and primary care providers, as well as experts and specialty leads for each region of Ontario.

We are working together with our colleagues who, with us, represent the foremost experts in the field, and are responsible for reviewing regional plans to ensure proactive local readiness and implementation of provincial strategies in areas such as assessment, testing and care; supplies/equipment; and surveillance/communications. We are also Co-leading the COVID-19 response for the long-term care sector, and we are actively working with our partner agencies and organizations to determine and implement best practices across the system.

Our Commitment to the Wellbeing and Safety of those for Whom We Care

We are wholeheartedly committed to doing all we can to protect everyone on our campus and to meet the needs of our clients and their families.

We are committed to sharing information with you in a transparent and timely way as we follow the best pandemic management practices. Should you have any other questions or concerns, please email covidquestions@baycrest.org or contact a member of your care team.

We want to thank you for your ongoing support as we continue to implement important, but difficult measures to support the health and safety of our residents, patients and staff members.