

Update provincial direction to resume non-urgent surgeries and procedures

On May 19, the province rescinded Chief Medical Officer of Health Directive #2 to enable the cautious and gradual resumption of hospital clinical services not expected to require inpatient resources.

Planning is underway across Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) – including at WLMH – to resume these services in a phased and equitable way. Ontario hospitals are required to maintain heightened levels of critical care and other ward capacity to respond to the ongoing pandemic.

Despite the positive trend in cases in our region, HHS sites and staff continue to play a large role in caring for some of the province's sickest COVID-positive patients. At the same time, care is continuing for patients who no longer have COVID-19 but remain in hospital as they recover, and maintain access to specialized regional programs.

For these reasons, the return of services and staff to their home units will occur over many weeks. For now, redeployed staff continue to be scheduled in to their temporary assignments.

We recognize the impact that this is having on everyone, particularly patients who are waiting for surgeries and procedures. Our goal remains to return staff to their areas as quickly as possible so that paused services can resume.

We are grateful to the many WLMH site staff and physicians who continue to be redeployed to other areas of the hospital as part of this directive, bringing their skills, knowledge and experience to provide care for patients from across Hamilton,

West Niagara and beyond. This includes critical care units and other clinical areas, but also supporting operations that are essential in our response to the pandemic, such as providing doses of COVID-19 vaccine at clinics.