

## MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### **REGIONAL HEALTH CARE PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER TO PREPARE FOR HIGH SEASONAL VOLUMES**

In anticipation of increased hospital volumes as we head into the winter, local health care partners – Erie Shores HealthCare (ESHC), Essex-Windsor EMS (EMS), Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare (HDGH) and Windsor Regional Hospital (WRH) - are collaborating on capacity and resource management and spreading the word about what our community should expect in the season ahead.

On an annual basis, hospitals anticipate high emergency department visits and admission volumes – often times running over 100% capacity – when viruses spread through our community every winter. This year, however, we are already operating at surge-season levels, running at 120% capacity even before winter begins. As a result, we expect the strain to be even greater in the coming months.

To manage this increased demand, we continue to implement methods to address patient overflow where required, including opening additional beds and redeploying resources where needed to help reduce the burden on patients and the staff who care for them. High volumes can lead to longer than expected wait times for both emergency services as well as admissions to hospital, including patients who have completed their acute care stay at WRH or ESHC and require transfer to limited complex medical/rehabilitation beds at HDGH or to a local long-term care facility. These patients are often referred to as “ALC,” or “Alternate Level of Care” to describe

individuals who remain in a hospital bed waiting for the next stage of their health care journey.

The public has an important role to play in helping us reduce hospital and ambulance wait times. For non-emergency situations, the public can phone 811, go to a walk-in clinic or make an appointment with their family doctor. Essex-Windsor EMS works closely with the Central Ambulance Communications Centre, local hospitals and other responders to ensure ambulances are available when emergencies happen. When ambulances are tied up with non-emergency calls and hospitals are at capacity, this becomes more challenging, leading to the “Code Blacks” often referred to in media stories. How can you help ensure paramedics will be available to attend to the most seriously ill and injured? Essex-Windsor EMS is encouraging residents to **Make The Right Call** by following the advice of health-care professionals and taking appropriate actions when they experience health-care crises. More information on EMS advice can be found here: [Make The Right Call - County of Essex](#). There is also a short EMS video on YouTube ([EMS Make The Right Call - YouTube](#)) that may help inform patients about their options in non-emergency situations.

Patients and families can also access resources through WRH and ESHC regarding alternatives to an Emergency Room visit when the patient issue is not an emergency. Visit the [Windsor Essex Ontario Health Team Guide to the Cough, Cold & Flu Season](#) for links to online medical assistance as well as primary care and clinic options in our region and beyond.

We appreciate the public's understanding of the impact seasonal viruses can have on our health care system and recognize that while high volumes can lead to longer than normal wait times for non-emergency cases, our clinicians are working hard every day and night to provide the best possible care for your loved ones.

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