



Health through partnership
Caring with kindness

January 4, 2022

Letter to the Community:

Bluewater Health is our community's hospital and with two locations and around 2000 team members committed to healthcare in Sarnia Lambton, these last 22 months have been unlike any other. Our situation today, however, is the most worrisome yet.

Over the past two weeks we have more than quadrupled the number of COVID-positive patients in hospital (from 7 to 31) and more than half of our ICU is occupied by critically-ill patients with COVID pneumonia. We had to reopen a COVID-dedicated medical unit and have shut down all surgeries except the most urgent to redeploy staff to COVID-related care areas. Our staff, who mainly live locally, are also more impacted by increased community infections than ever before. The combination of increased patients and stretched staffing is making it difficult to manage the clinical loads. We have almost five times the usual number of staff on sick leave and we have many working double shifts and cancelling much-needed vacations.

Our ICU is seeing younger COVID patients -- many in dire situations. Most patients with severe COVID disease are not vaccinated yet and we are having end-of-life discussions with families of patients in all age categories -- not just older ages. We are experiencing an increase of upwards of 30% traffic in our Emergency Departments in Sarnia and Petrolia. Our phone is ringing off the hook as people are asking us -- as a trusted resource -- about what to do.

We are honoured and humbled to take care of our community -- we own this responsibility with humility. Our best guidance to this community, now more than ever, is to please stay at home (don't socialize), get vaccinated/boosted as soon as possible and wear a mask in public indoor spaces. Above all, please be kind to one another as we are truly in this together. Healthcare delays affect all of us with no exceptions.

For those of you who require hospital-level care: we are here for you and always will be. We've got you.

Please help us help the people who need us most. Thank you and stay safe.

Mike Lapaine, President & CEO
Dr. Mike Haddad, Chief of Staff