

Riverside Health Care COVID-19 Response: UPDATE

As Wave 2 of COVID-19 advances we are experiencing increased positive test results across the region, particularly in the communities of Thunder Bay and Kenora. Spiking cases in Manitoba, Koochiching County and most urban centres add to the risk for the communities across the Rainy River District.

Riverside continues to implement its pandemic plan, responding to the ongoing risk of COVID-19 to ensure the health and safety of our communities. Over the last 9 months, our team has worked diligently to implement and adapt our plan to continue to deliver safe, quality care for our patients, residents, clients, physicians and staff.

While there are no individuals with COVID-19 admitted to LaVerendrye General Hospital (LVGH) currently, we now have one confirmed case of a staff member at the hospital. In addition to the protocols instituted by the North Western Health Unit related to close contacts of this individual, we have taken additional precautions for staff that may have had more extended contact with the individual by:

- ensuring that non clinical staff are isolated and working from home while waiting for test results and an appropriate isolation period;
- advancing to a higher protection level mask and testing for all clinical areas; and
- isolating anyone we deem to be a direct contact, as per Health Unit guidelines.

These added protocols were implemented immediately to ensure our environment remains safe to continue to deliver clinical programs and services, including emergency, inpatient care, surgeries, diagnostic testing and outpatient services.

Screening protocols continue to take place for anyone entering our hospitals, including all staff. Visitor restrictions at our hospital and long-term care sites remain in place.

New long term care protocols have been implemented by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care making it **mandatory** that staff, students, and volunteers are tested every two weeks. Caregivers, Support Workers and General Visitors in the Rainy River District **are required** to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past two weeks and verbally attest to not subsequently testing 'positive'. An exception to this requirement may be made where the Support Worker or Visitor requires immediate access in an emergency or palliative situation.

We understand that the screening process, mandatory masking and restrictions on visitors can be difficult; however, these practices are in place for the safety of all.

“It is now more important than ever to take safety precautions seriously. The use of masks, maintaining physical distance of 2 meters, practicing hand hygiene and only travelling outside of Northern Ontario if absolutely necessary are the best defense against the spread of COVID-19.” said Julie Loveday, VP Clinical Services & CNE. “Your diligence, both inside and outside our facilities, is appreciated.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Reference:

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Riverside Health Care is a fully accredited multi-site, multi-function health care system serving the residents of the Rainy River District. Riverside Health Care operates hospitals in Fort Frances, Emo and Rainy River, and Rainycrest Long-Term Care Home and La Verendrye Non Profit Supportive Housing in Fort Frances. Each community is also served by Riverside Community Counselling which provides mental health and addictions services, Community Support Services through Rainycrest and Riverside Valley Diabetes Education Centre which provides important chronic disease management programming. For more information, please visit riversidehealthcare.ca