

For Immediate Release:

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South West Hospitals to Maintain Masking Requirements Indefinitely

Hospitals across the south west have updated their ongoing protections against COVID-19 and confirm that current masking requirements for all individuals entering their facilities will continue indefinitely.

“Throughout the pandemic, we have, as a system of hospitals been continually assessing what we feel are responsible protections for our patients, our teams, and those visiting our hospital sites,” says Andrew Williams, HPHA President and CEO. “As the pandemic continues to impact our communities, including significantly affecting our ability to staff programs and services due to increasing COVID-19 absences, maintaining this level of protection in high-risk environments is prudent. While opinions on direction will always vary, our top priority is the safety of those we serve.”

In addition to continuing to require masking, active screening of all individuals entering hospital facilities will be maintained. COVID-19 Immunization Policies that require all new midwives, physicians, staff, volunteers and contractors to be vaccinated will also remain in place.

“London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) is seeing the impact of the sixth wave on our health care system, and it is significant. We are feeling pressure from rising numbers of patients, and the increased numbers of staff off due to COVID-19,” said Michael Payne, Medical Director, Infection Prevention and Control, LHSC. “We know that masking is an important tool in our kit to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. We support the direction of our health care partners in South West Ontario to maintain mask requirements for the foreseeable future.”

In addition, LHSC will also be maintaining the following safety measures in our facilities:

- Universal masking for visitors, patients, staff and physicians
- Active screening for all visitors, patients, staff and physicians when arriving at the hospital
- Mandatory vaccine policies for staff and physicians
- [Care Partner Presence Policy](#)

With these adjustments in place, individuals are reminded that getting vaccinated and boosted remains the best protection against serious illness and hospitalization from COVID-19. In addition, hospitals urge everyone to continue with public health recommendations such as masking where physical distancing is not possible, staying home if unwell, and regular hand washing.

Supporting this announcement are: Alexandra Hospital Ingersoll, Alexandra Marine and General Hospital, Grey Bruce Health Services, Hanover and District Hospital, Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance, Listowel Wingham Hospital Alliance, London Health Sciences Centre, Middlesex Hospital Alliance, St. Joseph's Health Care London, St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital, South Bruce Grey Health Centre, South Huron Hospital Association, Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, and Woodstock General Hospital.

About London Health Sciences Centre

As one of Canada's largest acute-care teaching hospitals, LHSC is dedicated to providing exceptional patient care, while championing the spirit of medical advancement through teaching practices and breakthrough research. For 146 years, LHSC has been an integral part of the London community offering compassionate medical care for its people, as well as those across the Southwestern Ontario region, and the world. National and international medical firsts have been pioneered at LHSC, including the discovery of vinblastine and the use of cobalt radiation transforming the lives of people across the globe. Through collaborative partnerships with Western University and over 30 educational institutions, more than 1,800 health care professionals actively seek out training opportunities each year at LHSC, acknowledging the opportunity to work alongside some of Canada's top medical scholars. With more than 15,000 staff, physicians, and residents, LHSC is committed to achieving its vision 'Working together to shape the future of health'. More information about LHSC can be found at www.lhsc.on.ca.

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