

For Immediate release:

December 22, 2022

Children's Hospital expands Paediatric Critical Care Unit by 60 per cent to manage increased patient volumes

(LONDON, Ontario) – In an effort to manage increased patient volumes and provide appropriate and timely medical care, Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) expanded its Paediatric Critical Care Unit (PCCU) by 60 per cent as of Tuesday, December 20, 2022.

Like all paediatric hospitals across the province, Children's Hospital continues to see an unprecedented increase in the number of children and youth needing critical medical care. With capacity volumes reaching 120 per cent last week and more patients presenting with respiratory ailments that manifested post-pandemic, Children's Hospital is actively working with government partners and health care peers to find innovative ways to address these challenges. One of these solutions is the creation of the PCCU Annex, a preexisting care space fully equipped to manage up to eight additional critical care paediatric patients.

"As this situation evolves, it's our priority to ensure we are finding innovative solutions to maintain critical care capacity," said Nash Syed, President of Children's Hospital.

"Thanks to the Ministry's timely support, we were able to utilize Ministry funds to increase bed capacity and create the PCCU Annex. The additional beds will provide the space we need to treat some of our most vulnerable paediatric patients while supporting patient flow to other areas."

In anticipation of the PCCU Annex opening, LHSC leadership sent an internal message to team members last week asking if those with critical care and paediatric experience would be willing to volunteer for redeployment to the PCCU Annex. Thanks to staff and physicians for responding to this request, the PCCU Annex is staffed to support and sustain the increase in bed capacity.

“Words cannot express the gratitude I have for our health care teams,” added Syed. “This is a challenging time for everyone, but I truly appreciate the staff’s willingness to step in and care for the patients we serve. In this constantly changing environment, our staff choose to adapt and meet the moment every day, and for this, I’m truly grateful.”

For family members and care partners with paediatric patients triaged in the PCCU Annex, please be advised of the following:

- One care partner is permitted at a time
- Each paediatric patient is triaged based on acuity and appropriately placed in a care space in which they will receive the appropriate level of medical support
- With limited space available in the PCCU Annex, health care teams will work closely with care partners to find appropriate rest areas, including the PCCU Sleep Room and Ronald McDonald House, understanding that parents want to be as close to their child as possible during this difficult time

Recognizing this is a challenging situation for many parents and their children, Children’s Hospital is reminding patients and visitors to please show kindness and respect to their health care teams, as well as the other patients and family members that are sharing the PCCU Annex space.

About London Health Sciences Centre

With roots going back a century and a half, London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC), is an award-winning, research-intensive acute tertiary and quaternary teaching hospital, one of only 14 such hospitals in Ontario. LHSC is also home to Children’s Hospital, one of just four acute tertiary care paediatric hospitals in the province. Our unique place in the health system positions us well to inform and advise on provincial, national and international health policy. We are the cornerstone of care for many specialized programs and services in Western Ontario. And, as a major provider of emergency care and through our community hospital mission, we also care for the more than 400,000 people who call London home as well as many in surrounding communities. With Ontario’s health system continuing its transformation, LHSC has an opportunity to inform it and to place itself at the locus of the regionalized health system by virtue of its size, specialized capabilities, research and education capacity and its current regional footprint. LHSC’s formal relationship and strong bond with Western University provides a mechanism for collaboration to enable the delivery of high quality care through a process of continuous learning and research. At its core, the affiliation is a

reciprocal relationship that leverages the learning, teaching and care environments of both Western University and LHSC. London Health Sciences Centre is a 15,000 person strong team of physicians, staff and volunteers – collaborators, innovators and pioneers, meeting the care needs of those we serve and charting a course for the future.

More information about LHSC can be found at www.lhsc.on.ca.

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For more information contact:

Steve Young

Media Relations Consultant

London Health Sciences Centre

(519) 685.8500 x77767

steve.young@lhsc.on.ca

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