



**Extra funding will help RMH support patients during holiday surge**

The Ross Memorial Hospital (RMH) team is pleased to receive \$1,464,000 in one-time funding from the Central East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) to maintain critical system capacity during the regular holiday/flu surge.

Ross Memorial Hospital has been experiencing higher than normal patient volumes for more than 18 months. Over the Christmas holidays, it's expected volumes will increase again, requiring the Hospital to open extra beds.

"This funding will support the costs associated with opening 12 beds over our regular bed capacity," said Dr. Bert Lauwers, RMH President and CEO. "Often when we need to open more beds to support high patient volumes, the costs to bring in the extra staff to care for those patients are over and above our regular funding. This new one-time funding allows us to open these extra beds with the confidence that funding is available. We're very grateful for this support."

The surge funding is part of a \$90 million investment by the Provincial Government.

"One of our Government's core commitments is to reduce hospital overcrowding and end hallway healthcare. This \$1.46 Million in surge funding over eight months is aimed at helping Ross Memorial Hospital manage higher demand during the upcoming flu season," said local MPP Laurie Scott. "The capacity issues that Ross Memorial Hospital is regularly experiencing are very concerning and we are working hard to ensure that they are receiving the resources needed to address this ongoing challenge. This surge funding is a first step in our ongoing commitment to end hallway health care at Ross Memorial and across the province," she added.

The onset of flu season and the increase in social gatherings over the holidays means healthcare providers expect a surge in the number of people seeking care at Christmas time. The Emergency Department team knows the typical patient surge will begin on Boxing Day and continue into March.

Patients are admitted to the Hospital for care, but at times must wait extended periods for a bed to become available on an inpatient unit. Having surge funding resources allows for proactive planning and the ability to open beds, thus reducing hallway health care. The main reason for these long waits is the high number of Alternate Level of Care patients in the Hospital. These are patients who no longer require acute care, but who are waiting for a bed to open in another more appropriate facility.

"During the holiday season and throughout the year, Central East LHIN front line Care Coordinators are available 7 days a week and along with their hospital and Community Support Service agency partners make every effort to ensure that resources are in place to support a patient to ultimately go home when discharged from hospital," said Amorell Saunders N'Daw, Central East LHIN Acting Board Chair. "This includes providing information, access to qualified care providers and other comprehensive services."

"When patients are preparing for discharge home, it's important for patients and families to plan ahead about the supports they require in their homes to make the transition from hospital to home easier," said Anne Overhoff, RMH Vice President Patient Care and Chief Nursing Officer. "These include equipment such as handrails, prepared meals, and scheduled home visits."