**To:** All Staff
**From:** Dr. Paul Woods *(President & CEO Template)*
**Subject:** LHSC gradually expands clinical services during the pandemic

This morning, LHSC will be announcing that we are moving forward with an initial plan to gradually and carefully expand some clinical services that were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This follows the [recent amendment to the Ministry of Health’s Directive #2](https://www.oha.com/Bulletins/Directive%202%20May%2026%202020.pdf) and regional approval of the hospital’s plan by Ontario Health West and support from the Middlesex-London Health Unit.

Planned surgeries, procedures and related ambulatory care for patients at LHSC are slowly resuming, with prioritization based on clinical evidence and need. **You can see more information about LHSC’s Clinical Service Expansion plan in the Phase 1 Summary available on the intranet.**

It important to note that this is **not** business as usual. We must strike a balance between slowly starting scheduled care and continuing to be ready for whatever COVID-19 might throw our way. All hospitals are mandated to have 15 per cent capacity available for a surge, or the ability to reduce capacity to 85 per cent very quickly.

As part of the gradual reintroduction of services, all health-care providers including LHSC must comply with [operational requirements](https://publicaffairs.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mhrdlld-jkiipkiui-y/) and follow key principles outlined in the [Ontario Health framework](https://www.ontariohealth.ca/sites/ontariohealth/files/2020-05/A%20Measured%20Approach%20to%20Planning%20for%20Surgeries%20and%20Procedures%20During%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic.pdf). This includes an ethical prioritization of patient care while carefully consideration criteria such as adequate human resources; supplies of Personal Protective Equipment and necessary medications; diagnostic and lab testing capacity; and, critical care beds and support. LHSC is also working closely with home and community care as well as primary care services.

The constraints that hospitals face are significant. We will continue to monitor our care volumes and quality of care on a weekly basis, and adjust expansion plans as needed. This will involve testing, modeling and evaluating the impact of service expansion as we proceed, taking a gradual and measured approach.

LHSC will continue to work with our regional partners to keep safety at the heart of our developing strategy to expand services as soon as we can. I recognize how difficult this waiting period can be for our patients and families.

As we have faced the challenges of COVID-19, LHSC has found new and innovative ways to deliver care. Thousands of our patients are now accessing remote and virtual care visits every week. Thank you for your continued commitment to caring for the patients we serve.

I ask that you join LHSC in encouraging the community to remain diligent in following the public health recommendations and slowing the spread of the virus. All efforts to “flatten the curve” help ensure that hospitals have the capacity to respond to any future COVID-19 surges.

Dr. Paul Woods
President & CEO