

News Release

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Bluewater Health Readies Emergency Field Hospital

Next-level Planning Underway

SARNIA – April 7, 2020 – Bluewater Health and Lambton College are preparing to change the school's West and East Gymnasiums into a 150-bed field hospital, as part of a provincial call to action for “next level” pandemic preparedness. This provides Bluewater Health with additional space should the hospital ever require additional capacity. The hospital is currently running at 55% capacity: at this point there are approximately 40 beds in use for COVID patients, the hospital has capacity of over 300 beds, and can over-bed with an additional 84 beds.

"We are preparing for a possible patient influx and creating capacity to care for the residents of Sarnia-Lambton," said Mike Lapaine, President & CEO, Bluewater Health. "Our hope is we do not need to move any patients to the Lambton College site, but we have to be ready for the worst case. On behalf of Bluewater Health, I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to both Lambton College and the City of Sarnia as we weather this storm of storms together."

Bluewater Health has secured the Lambton College location to ensure that an offsite location is available should the unlikely event happen that the hospital is unable to deal with the volume of all ill patients, COVID and non-COVID. This pandemic back-up plan approach is consistent with all hospitals across the province and the current plan would move non-COVID-19 patients, offsite to the field hospital.

Lambton College was chosen because the facility has onsite bathroom capacity, food services and cleaning services. The facility has been transformed with the help of the City of Sarnia's Emergency Management Operations Group (EMOC) with beds and cots, readied for potential patients. The set-up would include stainless steel rooms/dividers to provide privacy for examinations and procedures and ease of disinfection.

Local hospitals, with support from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, have already increased capacity within the system. Prior to the confirmation of local cases of COVID-19, Bluewater Health reduced the census at its two acute care hospitals by pausing scheduled surgeries and through the support of families and community partners.

Lambton College President and CEO Judy Morris said the college was "honoured" to assist Bluewater Health in its "heroic battle" against this devastating virus. "Our students and staff have been using the Gymnasiums to foster their health for the past half-decade, so it is a natural transition for the community to use them now to restore its health," Morris said. "We will continue to respond immediately and enthusiastically to anything asked of the college while this challenge confronts our community."

Bluewater Health, with locations in Sarnia and Petrolia, cares for the residents of Sarnia-Lambton. With close to 2,500 staff, Professional Staff and volunteers, Bluewater Health provides an array of specialized acute, complex continuing care, allied health and ambulatory care services. Bluewater Health's Mission is: *We create exemplary healthcare experiences with patients and families every time.* For more information about Bluewater Health, visit www.bluewaterhealth.ca or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

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