



Service Planning and Clinical Services Expansion during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Script for patient calls – Communicating delay to service

PURPOSE

Instructions and telephone script for staff speaking to patients about care that is being delayed due to COVID-19.

This may apply to:

- Medical imaging appointments
- Treatments and therapies
- In-hospital consultations
- Procedures and surgeries

Notes:

- Obtain patient consent for the telephone call. You will be prompted in the script.
- Modify this script as needed based on your current service offerings and the patient's care plan.
- Patient Relations can help with communication between the patient and health care team in cases where there are questions or concerns that may benefit from being discussed in greater detail, e.g. social, emotional or mental health issues. **Offer the patient contact information for Patient Relations – 519-685-8500 ext. 52036.** Please indicate that:
 - Contacting Patient Relations is the patient's choice and is optional.
 - Patient Relations provides an opportunity for the patient to speak further with someone outside of their health care team, and to have their concerns and feedback documented.



TELEPHONE SCRIPT

- Hi, may I speak with **[patient name]**?
- This is **[caller name]** calling from **[clinic name or physician's office]** at London Health Sciences Centre. Is this a good time to talk?
- For privacy reasons, I want to make sure that I'm speaking to the right person. Can you please tell me your date of birth?
[If further information is needed to confirm the patient's identity, ask for OHIP# or name of primary care doctor or date of last visit to the hospital or clinic.]
- And could you please confirm that you approve speaking with me today on the phone about your care at LHSC?
 - *[Document answer]*
- Thank you. I am calling to tell you about a change in your upcoming **[test, appointment, procedure name]** at **[clinic/service name]** at **[hospital site]** on **[date]** and **[time]**. Unfortunately, we need to delay this **[test, appointment, procedure]** and it won't be proceeding at this time.
- I am very sorry. I understand that this may be disappointing and cause worry for you. Waiting for care can be very difficult. It is a challenging situation and please know that your care is important to us.
- Due to the pandemic, the hospital has reduced services in order to help stop the transmission of the virus and be able to care for patients with COVID-19. LHSC has been following the directives from the Ministry of Health and public health guidance.



London Health Sciences Centre

- As you may have heard, we can now start to slowly and carefully expand care to more patients. However, we still face a lot of challenges and must be ready for whatever COVID-19 might throw our way.
- LHSC is still having to delay many appointments, tests and procedures. It will be some time before we are operating as normal again. We are doing everything we can to bring more people into the hospital for care visits when it is safe to do so.
- Your health-care team **[or physician]** has carefully reviewed your care plan and determined that your **[test, appointment, procedure]** can be safely delayed at this time.
- Services at the hospital are following an ethical prioritization process that must be fair for all patients. All treatment decisions are being made based on clinical evidence and need.
- Again, I'm very sorry about the delay. We will continue to stay in touch with you and monitor your health closely.
- Here are the next steps planned for your care – **[Modify as needed]**:
 - We will have a telephone or virtual care visit with you on **[DATE and TIME]**. Your **physician/provider** will discuss your health and determine if further changes to your care plan are needed.
 - We will reschedule your **[test, treatment, procedure]** as soon as the hospital is able to do so. You will hear from us as soon as there is an opportunity to reschedule and give you some time to prepare.



- In the meantime, you can contact us directly if you have any questions. Do you know how to get in touch with us? **[If no, provide clinic contact information if requested]**
- If your symptoms change at all, including **[add specific examples]**, please call us or your primary care physician.
- If you experience severe symptoms such as **[add specific examples]**, please call 911 or go to the Emergency Department. Please know the hospital is safe if you need to come in.
- ***[teach-back moment]*** I just gave you a lot of information, and I want to be sure that I was clear. Could you repeat back to me which symptoms you are watching for, and when you should call us or seek emergency care? You may want to write these down.
 - **[provide the information again if needed]**
 - **[if correct]** Yes, that's right. Thank you.
- We will keep a record that your scheduled **[test, appointment, procedure]** has been delayed.
- We are also going to document this discussion in your medical record. **[If applicable:]** The doctor who referred you will receive a copy of this note.
- Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. We appreciate your understanding during this challenging time.



- We will talk to you at your scheduled remote appointment on **[DATE and TIME]**. If you will have a virtual care appointment, you will be provided details about how to connect to our virtual line.
- Do you have any questions for me?
 - *Answer as best as you can. Potential questions and answers are listed in the resource document provided by LHSC. Please refer to Patient Relations if they have general concerns or consult with your leader.*
- Thank you again. Goodbye.