



Eastern  
Health

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Increase in Positive COVID-19 Cases on Unit at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital**

**February 26, 2021 – St. John's, NL:** Eastern Health advises the public that additional restrictions and measures are temporarily in place at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital after a small number of employees and patients tested positive for COVID-19 on a unit.

Following the first positive case reported on February 8, 2021, testing and investigation has been ongoing which has resulted in the identification of an additional small number of positive cases on this unit. Eastern Health is moving quickly to minimize any potential spread of the COVID-19 virus at this site. A Rapid Response Team has been deployed to St. Clare's Mercy Hospital and testing of affected patients and staff is underway. All positive patients on the unit have been transferred to the COVID-19 Unit at the Health Sciences Centre. All other patients on the unit have been put on strict isolation precautions and transferred to single rooms. The unit is closed to new admissions at this time and staff movement is limited in and out of the area.

"We understand that this is a stressful time for patients and for staff members on this unit at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital," said Dr. Natalie Bridger, Clinical Chief for Infection Prevention and Control at Eastern Health. "We would like to assure you that we have stringent infection control and prevention measures in place and are managing the situation according to best practice. We are fortunate to have been able to identify these cases when we did, and we are confident that the measures we are taking will limit the further spread of the COVID-19 virus."

Out of an abundance of caution, Eastern Health is testing all inpatients currently at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, and recent discharges from the unit of St. Clare's Mercy Hospital since February 19, 2021. Patients will be contacted if testing is required. Employees who worked at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital from February 19, 2021 onwards will also be tested. Eastern Health is streamlining testing at the COVID-19 testing site at the Reid Centre in Mount Pearl.

Contact tracing for all positive cases is ongoing. If you are a close contact, Public Health will contact you through the contact tracing process. Otherwise, please monitor for symptoms and if you experience one single symptom of COVID-19, please complete the online self-assessment and referral tool at [www.811healthline.ca](http://www.811healthline.ca) or call the NL Health Line 811 to arrange testing.

Upon learning of the positive results on this unit, patients were immediately relocated, and affected employees were sent home to isolate. Enhanced cleaning protocols have been implemented and required personal protective equipment protocols for patients on isolation are being followed. This includes wearing full personal protective equipment while working until confirmed negative and no use of shared break spaces.

"We continue to be diligent in our management of this public health emergency," David Diamond, President and CEO of Eastern Health. "We are subject to the same public health risks observed in the community. We are monitoring this evolving situation closely and rest assured that all necessary precautions will be put in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our patients, our staff and their families."

Quality care remains a priority for Eastern Health as we continue to work through this pandemic with the support and cooperation of the public. Patients who require emergency care and those with confirmed scheduled appointments should continue to proceed to the hospital for care. For everyone's safety, masks are provided to patients and visitors entering Eastern Health facilities. The provided mask must be worn by all visitors while in the facility.

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### **About Eastern Health**

Eastern Health is the largest, integrated health authority in Newfoundland and Labrador employing approximately 13,000 dedicated employees, over 600 medical staff, and is supported by approximately 2,000 volunteers, including members of numerous auxiliaries and fundraising foundations. With an annual budget of approximately \$1.5 billion, the authority offers the full continuum of health and community services including public health, long-term care, community services, hospital care and unique provincial programs and services. Serving a population of over 300,000, Eastern Health's geographic boundaries extend west from St. John's to Port Blandford including all communities on the Avalon, Burin and Bonavista Peninsulas.

### **Media Contact:**

Tracey Boland

Media Relations Manager

Eastern Health

T: (709) 777-1412

[TraceyL.Boland@easternhealth.ca](mailto:TraceyL.Boland@easternhealth.ca)