



# ***PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT***

## **Eastern Health Provides Update on Services Available During Alert Level 5**

**February 14, 2021 – St. John's, NL:** Following the announcement by the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health to move to COVID-19 Alert Level 5, Eastern Health is advising the public of a reduction of elective and non-urgent services and procedures at its facilities across the region, effective tomorrow (Monday, February 15, 2021).

At this time, Eastern Health is focusing on the delivery of urgent and emergent services. Patients whose appointments are proceeding will be contacted directly by Eastern Health staff. Postponed appointments will be rescheduled at a future date and patients will be contacted.

Eastern Health recognizes this change in services may be challenging for some patients but is balancing the need to continue certain urgent operations with the ability to keep our patients, staff and physicians safe while appropriately responding to COVID-19 health-care system demands.

In accordance with Alert Level 5 to decrease potential sources of COVID-19 spread, Eastern Health is advising the public of the following changes:

### **Cancer Care**

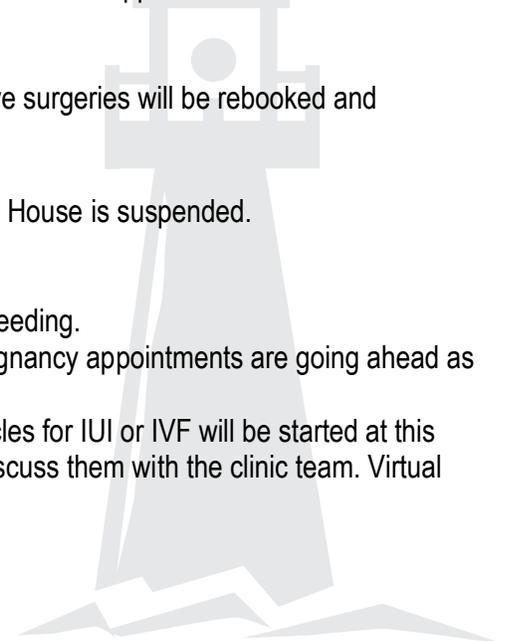
- Cancer services across the province will continue. If there is a change to scheduled appointments, patients will be notified. Patients are encouraged to contact the Cancer Centre in their region to confirm their appointments before they travel.
- Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy Appointments will continue as scheduled.
- Patients are asked to not come onsite for an in-person appointment unless contacted by the clinic and instructed to do so no more than 10 minutes in advance of the scheduled appointment time.

### **Cardiac Care**

- Urgent/emergent cardiac surgeries will continue. Affected elective surgeries will be rebooked and individuals will be contacted by Eastern Health.
- Urgent and emergent cardiac catheterizations will proceed.
- The Cardiac Rehabilitation Program that takes place at the Field House is suspended.

### **Children and Women's Health**

- Maternal Fetal Assessment Unit (MFAU) appointments are proceeding.
- All obstetrics and prenatal appointments as well as high risk pregnancy appointments are going ahead as scheduled, unless otherwise notified.
- Fertility services will continue for current patients but no new cycles for IUI or IVF will be started at this time. Current patients who have questions are encouraged to discuss them with the clinic team. Virtual appointments will be utilized, where possible.



- Urgent/emergent outpatient appointments at the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre and Women's Health Clinic are proceeding, as are any previously booked virtual appointments. Patients will receive a phone call if their appointment is going ahead. Where possible, appointments will be offered virtually. Otherwise, the appointment will be rescheduled and an updated appointment letter with a new date will be sent to the patient in the coming weeks.
- Breastfeeding clinics will proceed virtually.

### **Laboratory Services (e.g. blood collection)**

- All non-urgent appointments beginning on Monday, February 15, 2021, have been cancelled.
- Urgent/emergent laboratory testing and services will continue.
- Eastern Health's outpatient blood collection sites are restricted to urgent blood collection only. This includes blood testing for patients requiring: INRs (international normalized ratios), therapeutic drug-level monitoring testing and, for cancer care patients, monitoring of cancer clinic profiles and other required cancer-related testing.

### **Long-term Care**

- Admissions to long-term care facilities are limited to urgent cases only.

### **Medical Imaging (e.g. X-ray, Ultrasound, Mammography, CT, MRI, Interventional Radiology, Nuclear Medicine, PET scan, Bone Mineral Density)**

- Obstetrical ultrasounds will proceed as planned.
- Only urgent/emergent Medical Imaging procedures will proceed, and patients will be contacted if their appointments are going ahead.
- All other affected appointments will be rescheduled and individuals will be contacted by Eastern Health.

### **Mental Health and Addictions**

- All Mental Health and Addictions Program clients with booked appointments will be contacted and offered telephone/virtual sessions, where possible.
- Doorways locations throughout the region will continue to offer services virtually or by telephone. Contact information to book appointments is available at <https://mha.easternhealth.ca/doorways/>.
- Mobile crisis response teams, and the ACT/FACT Team will continue to provide services.
- Eastern Health operates a provincial opioid dependence treatment phone line for those seeking support and services for their opiate use, for their families and for health-care providers. It is available from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-844-752-3588, toll-free. Video Relay Service (VRS) calls are welcome.

### **Outpatient Procedures and Services**

- All in-person outpatient services will be limited to urgent visits only. Patients with booked appointments will be contacted prior to their appointment time to confirm if their appointment is cancelled or going ahead.
- Virtual care will be used to provide service where possible.
- The following services will not be impacted:
  - In-centre dialysis will continue across the region.
  - Urgent/emergent appointments at outpatient clinics will continue.
  - Community-based services will continue (for example, nursing care, home support and special assistance program).
  - Eastern Health primary health care and family medicine clinics are continuing.
  - Family practice clinics (doctor's appointments) located at Eastern Health sites will continue.

Follow-up appointments may be provided by telephone or other virtual technologies, where appropriate.

### **Public Health Services**

- St. John's and area:
  - Public Health Clinics which include child health clinic, preschool health check, school-aged vaccines, and adult immunizations (including Prenatal Tdap and Seasonal Influenza) will be deferred to a later date.
  - In person Breastfeeding Support Groups remain cancelled while continuing to be offered virtually.
  - Postnatal home visiting and support will continue to be offered.
- Peninsulas and Rural Avalon:
  - Public Health Clinics which include child health clinic, Prenatal Tdap and time sensitive adult immunizations (i.e. medically indicated) will continue to be offered.
  - Preschool health check, school-aged vaccines, and routine adult immunizations (including Seasonal Influenza & Pneumococcal) will be deferred to a later date.
  - In person Breastfeeding Support Groups remain cancelled while continuing to be offered virtually.
  - Postnatal home visiting and support will continue to be offered.

### **Services at Dr. L.A. Miller Centre**

- All inpatient rehabilitation services will continue.
- The Palliative Care Unit continues to be operational.
- Outpatient/ Home Palliative Care consult services continue, although some visits may be by telephone or virtual.
- Home Dementia and Geriatric Medicine appointments continue; some visits will be conducted by telephone or virtual.
- Physician clinics for Pain and Spasticity Management for urgent cases; some appointments will continue virtually.
- Chronic Pain and Disability Management continues virtually.
- All other in-person outpatient appointments are cancelled and will shift to virtual delivery, where possible. This includes Prosthetics and Orthotics, Specialized Seating, Rehabilitation Day Services (therapy appointments) and regular physician clinics.
- Patients and clients will be contacted about cancellation of appointments, rescheduling, or shifting to virtual care. Please do not proceed to an appointment without specific instruction to do so.

### **Surgeries**

- Urgent/emergent surgeries will continue. Patients will be contacted if their surgery is going ahead. Affected elective surgeries will be rescheduled and individuals will be contacted by Eastern Health about their surgery.
- Please note that patients who are scheduled for elective surgeries on Monday, February 15 are being accommodated.

Due to changes in service related to COVID-19, a new temporary phone line is now available for those who have questions about the status of their appointments. Patients and clients can call **709-752-4500**, or **toll-free at 1-833-752-4500**, this week from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., for information about previously scheduled appointments, procedures and treatments. The line is also staffed today (Sunday, February 14) until midnight for the benefit of those who have questions related to appointments early this week. Beginning Monday, February 22, the line will be available Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Please note that this temporary phone line does **not** provide health advice or COVID-19 screening information. Individuals who have questions about their health are directed to call 811 or visit [www.811healthline.ca](http://www.811healthline.ca). For more information on COVID-19, please visit the Provincial Department of Health and Community Services website at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>.

For updates pertaining to Eastern Health's ongoing services, please visit Eastern Health's Facebook page and Twitter feed. General contact information for Eastern Health's programs and services is available at: [www.easternhealth.ca/contactus](http://www.easternhealth.ca/contactus).

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