



Eastern
Health

NEWS RELEASE

Eastern Health Provides Update on COVID-19 Cases at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital

March 1, 2021 – St. John's, NL: Eastern Health advises the public that all inpatients and the majority of staff of St. Clare's Mercy Hospital have now been tested for COVID-19. No new patients have been confirmed positive. With an additional small number of cases now identified, the total number of patients and/or staff on Unit 6 East who have tested positive for COVID-19 is 12.

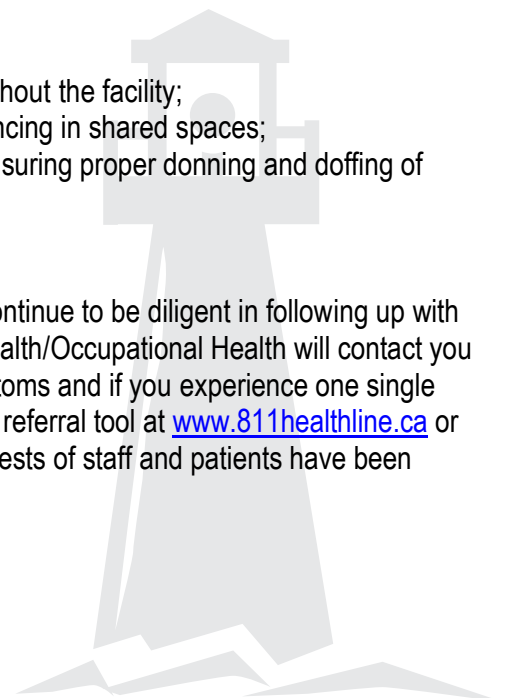
Additional restrictions and measures continue to be in place at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital and, in consultation with staff, the impacted unit temporarily closed as of Sunday, February 28. All patients who had tested positive were moved to the COVID-19 unit at the Health Sciences Centre and the remainder of the patients who tested negative have now been discharged or transferred to an alternative location. Out of an abundance of caution, the unit will remain closed for 14-days in an effort to reduce any potential for transmission of COVID-19 and allow for deep cleaning and staff isolation. During this two-week period, Eastern Health will continue to provide care to surgical patients who would have normally been admitted to 6 East on other surgical units at the hospital.

"We remain confident that the stringent measures we are taking will prevent spread of the COVID-19 virus at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital." said Dr. Natalie Bridger, Clinical Chief for Infection Prevention and Control at Eastern Health. "With its long incubation period and prevalence of asymptomatic individuals, this virus creates challenges in identifying the source of cases. The investigation into the source of spread continues, and we are continuing work to clearly pinpoint a source at this time."

Following the first positive case of an employee reported on February 9, 2021, testing and investigation has been ongoing and evolving with the situation. Eastern Health has put measures in place to minimize any potential spread of the COVID-19 virus at this site, including:

- enhanced cleaning protocols throughout the facility;
- enhanced personal protective equipment (PPE) protocols throughout the facility;
- staff breaks spaced and timed to allow for adequate social distancing in shared spaces;
- additional staff in place throughout the facility to assist staff in ensuring proper donning and doffing of PPE; and,
- minimized movement of staff across units.

Contact tracing is ongoing and Occupational Health and Public Health continue to be diligent in following up with close contacts across multiple sites. If you are a close contact, Public Health/Occupational 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 or call the NL Health Line 811 to arrange testing. Since Friday, over 1,500 tests of staff and patients have been completed.



“As we continue to work through the COVID-19 pandemic and this particular situation, quality care remains a priority for Eastern Health,” said David Diamond, President and CEO of Eastern Health. “We recognize this has been a stressful and challenging time for the employees and physicians of St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital, and I commend them for their commitment to quality health care. They have gone above and beyond to ensure patients have been safe and cared for and I thank them for their tremendous work.”

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.

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