

Date: January 6, 2022
To: GW OHT Core Steering Committee
From: Emmi Perkins, Director of Transformation
Subject: **Key Messages – Core Steering – January 5, 2022**

Key Messages

The following are the Key Messages from the Guelph Wellington OHT Steering Committee meeting on January 5th, 2022. They can be shared as appropriate with your staff, clinicians, boards, and partners.

- The focus of this meeting was the collective response of GW OHT partners to the current COVID situation in our community. As we have in all other waves, we will continue to work together as a team of trusted healthcare partners to assess, manage and mitigate the pressures that we are experiencing because of Omicron - which we expect to increase over the coming several weeks.
- Members of the Steering Committee shared their respective organizational experiences and challenges as well as discussed how the OHT could support a coordinated response to the needs across the system. The Steering Community agreed that vaccinations, prioritized care for our most vulnerable citizens and supporting our staff are the principles that will guide our response.
- Dr. Nicola Mercer, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Medical Officer of Health provided an update on the public health response during Omicron. Public health continues to work on ensuring eligible residents receive their vaccines, which continues to be a vital measure to reduce the impact of the virus. Drop-ins are being welcomed for children ages 5-11 for their first or second dose, adults 68 and older for a booster dose, school staff and teachers for a booster dose, and childcare educators and staff for a booster dose. Additionally, fourth booster doses will soon be rolled out for long-term care facility residents. Further, public health has also advised individuals to work from home unless they are critical to service within their place of employment to reduce transmission in the community.

Vaccination

- Priority for vaccines should focus on those with barriers to access (socioeconomic, language, challenges booking online), those who are pregnant as well as frontline workers.
- With the reduced availability of Pfizer vaccine, Moderna is the only vaccine being provided in Guelph Wellington vaccination clinics to people over 30. This will ensure a sufficient supply of Pfizer for those under 30.
- Immune responses are in fact GREATER (higher measures of immunity for longer) with Moderna as a booster dose, and GWOHT partners are being asked to broadly communicate this messaging with clients and staff.
- Health human resources continue to be a SIGNIFICANT challenge for all health care providers due to staff experiencing illness, needing to isolate, childcare issues related to remote learning/COVID, and/or being redeployed to other areas of critical need in the health system.

- New directives from the Ministry of Health now allow for non-regulated health professionals (NRHPs) to deliver vaccines, under the supervision of regulated health professionals. The directive can be found in [Ontario Regulation 107-96](#) (See clause 15(1) 3(i)). Wellington-Dufferin-Public Health has [additional training on COVID-19 vaccine administration](#) that may be helpful as well. Partners are asked to consider how to optimize NRHPs to administer vaccinations to enable us to make registered staff available for other functions across the system.

Redeployment

- It is estimated that 1/100 individuals who contract the Omicron variant will require hospitalization. While this is lower than we have seen with other variants, due to the extreme transmissibility of Omicron, we anticipate that our hospital and health care system will become overwhelmed. This situation is compounded by the health human resource challenges described above.
- In anticipation of reaching critical staffing shortage thresholds, we are asking every health care organization in the GW OHT to proactively develop a list of staff who could be re-deployed to a community provider who is in critical need. A separate message will be sent describing this request.

Testing, Isolation, and Illness

- The most recent Ministry tools to guide your organizational decision-making for staff isolation and return to work are depicted in a '[High Risk Contact Flow Chart](#)'. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health also has guidance for [positive cases and high-risk contacts](#).
- Forward-facing SYMPTOMATIC Health Care Workers continue to be eligible for PCR testing, and are encouraged to continue booking with the Guelph Assessment Centre (1-226-773-1922 or visit <https://www.gghorg.ca/covid-19-and-ggh/covid-19-testing/>) or the Rural Wellington Assessment Centre (1-226-383-2415 or visit <https://www.whcacovid.com/>)

Mental Health Supports

- The stress and strain on providers and leaders in the health care system is profound. We all need to take care of ourselves as we continue to work to support our community through this pandemic. During this time of uncertainty and stress, there are supports for healthcare workers and first responders within our community. Details can be found on the Here4Help [webpage](#).

*If you have any questions or comments, please contact Emmi Perkins
(emmi.perkins@quelphwellingtonoht.com)*