

## **In Alignment With Regional Partners, Pembroke Regional Hospital Further Reduces Masking Requirements**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 8, 2023**

PEMBROKE - Effective August 8<sup>th</sup>, in alignment with regional hospitals and based on the current risk level in the community for COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has further reduced its masking requirements.

“As COVID is no longer considered a pandemic threat, but instead part of the circulating respiratory viruses, we continue to move towards our ‘new normal’,” said PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann.

“As always, masks are encouraged for all who need or want them and we will support those who choose to wear a mask because they feel vulnerable or to keep their loved ones safe,” she said, adding that PRH will continue to make masks available throughout the hospital.

Effective today, however, **masks will no longer be required in areas outside of the Emergency Department or the Systemic Therapy (Chemotherapy) and Medical Daycare unit (such as hallways, common areas, patios, other waiting rooms, etc.), unless they are specifically required for infection prevention and control reasons, or if a patient requests it.**

“We will continue to require masks for staff, patients and visitors in the Emergency Department for the foreseeable future since that area has the highest risk for exposure to a viral infection that is not yet diagnosed,” Mrs. Mersmann said. She added that the vulnerability of those receiving chemotherapy is also the reason for maintaining required masking in that area of the hospital.

**In addition, masks are still required:**

- **When someone coming for an outpatient appointment is unwell.**
- **If a patient or visitor is asked to wear a mask by their health care provider.**
- **If there is signage that indicates masks are required to enter the patient care space.**

Pembroke Regional Hospital staff and physicians will also mask based on the following five scenarios:

- If a patient asks staff to wear a mask.
- If a staff member’s point-of-care risk assessment suggests they should be wearing a mask to protect their mucous membranes from splash or spray of blood or body fluids, or to protect a vulnerable patient from their respiratory secretions.
- If there is signage, such as a droplet/contact precautions sign that indicates masks are required to enter the patient care space.
- If a unit is on outbreak, requiring all patient care to be delivered wearing a mask.

- If a staff member is on Work Self Isolation.

When you visit the hospital, you will find updated signs to let you know where and when masks are required. Given the circumstances, please note that masking requirements are subject to change based on the community's risk level. Should this occur, PRH will ensure that this information is broadly communicated.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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