

Pembroke Regional Hospital Expands Its Ability To Care For High Acuity Patients In The ICU (Intensive Care Unit)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PEMBROKE - Some of the region's sickest patients will soon benefit from expanded capacity in the Pembroke Regional Hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and a new model of care led by an ICU specialist. For many, this will mean the opportunity to receive critical care close to home and will reduce the likelihood of being transferred to an Ottawa area hospital.

While reaching this point in the process has taken a lot of time, work and dedication by staff, physicians and other stakeholders in the region, Beth Brownlee, Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services and Chief Nursing Executive said the end result will enable the hospital to improve the quality of care for acutely ill patients, reduce the need to transfer some of those patients to other critical care facilities and ensure better patient outcomes.

"By providing 24/7 critical care coverage through the introduction of intensivists and other staff with specialized skills, families will be able to keep their loved ones closer to home when they are most vulnerable," Ms. Brownlee said.

An intensivist is a physician who has advanced training and certification in diagnosing and treating critical illness and injury. Intensivists have experience in treating patients with complex health care needs and are particularly skilled in treatment of critical health problems such as shock (severe heart and circulatory failure), respiratory failure (severe breathing problems), hemorrhage (severe bleeding problems), cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and many others.

An intensivist has the primary responsibility for the ICU patient's care, oversees all decision-making and coordinates other services the patient may need – including those from other specialists.

Dr. Tom Hurley, Chief of Staff said that the expanded services offered by intensivists build on the many successes already achieved by the Pembroke Regional Hospital's ICU team.

"The previous model was highly successful, allowing for the care of 491 patients in 2020-2021 alone. The addition of the intensivists, and the expanded role of nursing and allied support staff, along with an investment in new equipment will allow for an increase in the breadth and severity of critical illnesses treated locally," Dr. Hurley said.

He added that the hospital's ICU program has been expanded in partnership with regional hospitals who will continue to care for certain critically ill Renfrew County patients, such as those needing urgent dialysis, invasive cardiac care or neurosurgical procedures.

In addition to the recruitment of intensivists to work at PRH, Ms. Brownlee said work is being done to also expand the team caring for more critically ill patients. This includes the recruitment of registered nurses (RNs) who have critical care experience, as well as education and training

for RNs who have an interest in critical care. Already, some of the department's RNs and respiratory therapists have spent time with their counterparts at the Queensway-Carleton Hospital as part of a mentorship program.

Already, all of the work and time and invested funding is paying off.

While it's currently in a "soft launch" phase, the expanded expertise and care model has enabled the hospital to manage additional critically ill patients closer to home.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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