

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Message to Patients, Families, and Our Communities

Kenora, ON, October 7, 2021

Dear Patients, Families, and Our Communities,

Over the past eighteen months, we have all been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including in our personal and collective lives. Our hospital and professional staff have worked tirelessly every day to keep our hospital and community safe while maintaining services and providing excellent care amidst all the pressures faced. We are exceedingly proud of their commitment and dedication to serve, their resilience amidst all the changes they have endured, and the sacrifices they have made throughout this challenging time.

Shortly after COVID-19 reached Canada, the community recognized these efforts and publicly showed their support and appreciation by writing cards and placing signs of praise and encouragement on our lawn and throughout the community. Others supported the hospital with financial donations to our Foundation and delivered food for our staff. This recognition was greatly appreciated by our hospital and professional staff.

It is also true that the pandemic period has triggered other behaviours that are having a direct impact on our ability to serve. We have seen an increase in harassment and verbal abuse by patients and visitors against our front-line workers. The brunt of abuse our staff has received includes harmful messages, harassment, bullying, name-calling, ethnic insults, and verbal and physical abuse. It has reached the point where it has resulted in emotional distress and physical injury, and in some situations, decisions to leave our organization.

This type of behavior undermines the hard work and sacrifices of hospital staff, nurses, and professional staff over the past 18 months. We condemn, in the strongest of terms, this targeted and misdirected abuse and harassment of healthcare workers that have occurred at our hospital.

We understand that people are growing tired of the pandemic, but we need everyone to show a little more kindness and respect to the staff, nurses, and professional staff who continue to selflessly work around the clock to provide care to those who need it most.

Sincerely,

Your LWDH Executive Team of:

Ray Racette, President & CEO

Dr. Sean Moore, Chief of Staff

Cheryl O'Flaherty, Vice President Corporate Services & CFO

Donna Makowsky, Vice President - Patient Care Services & CNO

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