

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LWDH staff resilience commended as flood response continues

Kenora, ON, May 13, 2026 – Lake of the Woods District Hospital (LWDH) is sharing an update following the recent flood event that has had a significant impact on hospital operations and services. This situation has been challenging for patients, staff, and our communities, while efforts remain focused on maintaining care, supporting teams, and building recovery. The following provides an overview of response efforts, impacts, and next steps.

Firstly, it is important to recognize the exceptional response from hospital staff. Cheryl O’Flaherty, President & CEO shares “Those working in the early morning hours of the night when the flood occurred, along with additional staff who were called in, acted quickly and decisively in an incredibly challenging situation. The team immediately responded, called in the right support and began redirecting water and initiating cleanup efforts. The actions taken that evening, and throughout the past week, have been extraordinary and reflect a team that should be deeply proud of its efforts.”

Alison Wesley-James, Vice President of Capital Redevelopment, who leads the team planning a new hospital for the region in partnership with Ogimaawabiitong – Kenora Chiefs Advisory (KCA) explains the limitations of the hospital’s aging facility, “A Facility Condition Assessment undertaken in 2021 identified \$53.8 million in deficiencies across key systems. Over the past five years, with Ministry support, LWDH has reduced this number to \$37.2 million. Although the building remains rated in poor condition, with a Facility Condition Index (a measure comparing repair costs to replacement value) of 42.6%, there have been targeted improvements which demonstrate ongoing efforts to manage and improve infrastructure despite limitations.” Portions of the facility date back to 1929 which creates a challenge in meeting modern healthcare standards.

Efforts are underway to assess additional emergency support options. The feasibility of mobile medical units is being evaluated with the Province of Ontario’s Emergency Medical Assistance Team attending Kenora. Discussions are also ongoing with the Canadian Armed Forces, and the City of Kenora is actively involved in supporting these efforts.

At this time, recovery timelines remain uncertain as a full damage assessment is completed but is estimated to take several months. The hospital’s insurance provider was engaged immediately and remains actively involved in evaluating impacts and determining next steps. LWDH is also working with Ontario Health and the Ministry of Health to explore additional infrastructure expertise and identify preventative measures moving forward.

Operational Updates:

- All surgeries have been cancelled through the end of May. The Surgical Services Team is actively working with regional hospitals to identify alternative capacity for general surgery procedures as well as regional orthopedic, gynecological, urological and ophthalmology procedures.

- The Respiratory Therapy Clinic is closed until further notice, pending the arrival of required equipment and supplies.
- The hospital Gift Shop was impacted and will remain closed until further notice.

LWDH will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available. The community is encouraged to follow the Lake of the Woods District Hospital Facebook page for the latest updates.

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