



Report from the Board Chair *December 2021*

As we reflect on this unimaginably busy year, I am so very proud of how our Hospital staff, administration, and our amazing team of health care providers on the front lines who have quickly and efficiently adapted to so much change, overcome immense challenges and have succeeded during unprecedented times. None of us knew the scope of what we would be facing as a leading health care institution during this pandemic, nor realize the impact to health care across not only our region, but the entire country. As Chair, I am honoured to lead a team that has accomplished so much during this truly historic period. We know there are still more challenges ahead, but I am confident that we have the skill and perseverance to tackle anything that comes our way in 2022.

Health care workers (including staff, professional staff, learners and volunteers) at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre who have received their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 168 days (or 24 weeks) ago are eligible to book an appointment for a third dose (or “booster shot”). As an academic and regional health sciences centre that serves vulnerable and at-risk populations, and one that must deal with a trending increase in COVID-19 cases provincially, a booster shot will provide our fully-vaccinated health care workers with an extra layer of protection, especially against other variants of COVID-19. With success to date, booster shot appointments are being booked and administered well into the new year.

The Ontario government have decided not to impose mandatory vaccinations on health care workers and has instead directed hospitals to make decisions based on their own local and regional situations. As a team, we have made great strides in keeping our hospital safe for all, and as such, we are proud to report that 96.2 percent of our staff are fully-vaccinated. Moving forward, we will be reviewing our situation at the Hospital and at the Health Research Institute, and deciding what our next steps will be. In the meantime, we continue to work in partnership with all our regional hospital partners, with the goal of working collaboratively to support our respective communities and region.

With that being said, let us not forget that influenza season is upon us. As we all know, it is a contagious and rapidly-spreading virus that moves efficiently from person to person. Even if you are a normally healthy individual, getting immunized against influenza is a great way to protect you and those around you. We are pleased that our amazing Occupational Health & Safety team stepped forward to provide flu shots to Hospital staff, physicians, volunteers and learners throughout the fall, and that many of you rolled up your sleeves to provide a measure of safety for yourself, your families, friends and colleagues. Let’s continue to ensure that this is a safe, happy and healthy holiday for all.

In 1985, the United Nations designated December 5th as International Volunteer Day, a global celebration that recognizes the contributions and positive impacts of volunteers in all areas of society. Each year, Volunteer Day is an opportunity for all of us to raise awareness of the work of volunteers, encourage governments to support volunteer efforts, and recognize volunteer contributions at local, national and international levels.

Volunteers play an integral role at our Hospital. They lend their time and skills to support clients and improve lives across the organization. We would like to take this opportunity to offer a heartfelt “Thank You” to our dedicated volunteers. Although the pandemic created great changes to our volunteer programs, we applaud those who found alternate ways to stay in touch during the height of the pandemic. Needless to say, we were thrilled when we were able to welcome volunteers back to service so that they could continue their important work.



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Our volunteer programs could not be a reality without the ongoing support of staff and managers – thank you for enabling our volunteers to make a difference in providing Patient and Family Centred Care at our Hospital.

Lastly, we would be remiss if we did not thank our Hospital staff, professional staff, and volunteers for making tremendous sacrifices to help keep our community safe throughout the last year. The Board is inspired by your unwavering commitment to safe, quality, patient and family centred care. Thank you for your flexibility, resilience and for continually adjusting to each situation as the pandemic unfolded and evolved. Moving forward, our priority, as always, is to work with our team, our care partners, our community and region to protect our patients and ensure that critical services are available to those who need them, while at the same time, maintaining a safe workplace for all.

Gord Wickham
Chair, Board of Directors, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre