



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, December 22, 2021

In response to the increase in local Omicron COVID cases Groves Memorial Community Hospital (GMCH) and North Wellington Health Care (NWHC) have updated their essential care partner/visitor guidelines and have some tips for the public on when, and where to receive a COVID Assessment.

Effective December 23, 2021 GMCH/NWHC essential care partners will have to be fully vaccinated (two doses) and show proof of vaccination before entering the hospital. Essential care partners (ECP) are a support person whose presence is considered essential to the safety and well-being of a patient while they are in the hospital. An ECP is different from a social visitor or a paid support worker. At this time, social visitors **will not** be allowed to visit patients in the hospital. "This new protocol will help to protect our patients who are at risk of becoming severely ill with COVID," states Angela Stanley, President and CEO, GMCH/NWHC. "There are some exceptions to this rule. For all the details about our ECP/ visitor policy please check our hospital websites at www.gmch.ca or www.nwhealthcare.ca

"When and where to go for a COVID-19 Assessment is confusing to the public right now. Please use the following tips to help make a wise decision and help to alleviate pressure on our health care system," explains Stanley.

Emergency Department:

- If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 that you feel is a medical emergency (such as shortness of breath, chest pain etc.) please go to your local Emergency Department or call 911
- Please do not go to the ED because you would like to have a COVID-19 test done

COVID-19 Assessment Centres:

- If you are:
 - experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (that are not a medical emergency)
 - Have been exposed to a confirmed case of the virus, as informed by your public health unit
 - A resident or work in a setting that has a COVID-19 outbreak, as identified, and informed by your local public health unit

MORE.../2

Please book an appointment at www.whcacovid.com or check public health's website for a list of all Assessment Centres in our region at: www.wdgpulichealth.ca We do not provide tests for travel or social reasons.

"We understand the toll COVID-19 is taking on our communities right now and stress levels are high." remarks Stanley. "We ask the public to please be kind to our health care workers as they are all working hard to support and care for our community."

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