

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020**

### **Families, visitors strongly urged to adhere to family presence guidelines at Kingston Health Sciences Centre**

**KINGSTON, Ont.** – As the province fights a trend of rising COVID-19 infections, Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) is urging our community to adhere to its visitor restrictions to protect the health and safety of patients, staff and the public at large.

To help it remain virus-free, KHSC adopted a critical family presence policy in March that is designed to control who enters the Kingston General Hospital (KGH) and Hotel Dieu Hospital (HDH) sites. Limiting measures include strict patient, family and visitor screening; restricting family presence for inpatient stay; and designating when and where family can accompany patients attending for outpatient visits.

These regulations are more essential than ever as congregating-style activities increase this fall, including students returning to school and an influx of post-secondary students to the city, as COVID-19 cases increase in the province and the influenza season quickly approaches.

“People need to acknowledge that a hospital is not a shopping mall where people can easily mingle. It is a place where our loved ones are ill and vulnerable and where they receive critical health care,” said Dr. David Pichora, KHSC’s president and chief executive officer.

“If we are to keep our doors open to the community and region and to continue adding back clinical services after the ramp down in the spring, then we must do everything we can to protect the hospital against COVID-19,” he said.

“We know the emotional strain family members feel when they cannot visit their loved ones in hospital and we are doing our best to provide options to stay connected. At the same time, we need people to follow the family presence guidelines and to work hand in hand with us to avoid a second wave of the coronavirus disease.”

KHSC encourages families to use options for visiting patients such as virtual visits, which can be easily arranged. It's also strongly advised that family members and friends of patients avoid congregating outside or near hospital grounds for a family visit on warmer days.

KHSC's full family presence guidelines and frequently asked questions are available at [www.kingstonhsc.ca/covid19](http://www.kingstonhsc.ca/covid19).

The renewed call for patients and families to partner with KHSC in keeping our hospital sites safe and healthy comes as we mark [World Patient Safety Day](#) on Sept. 17. This year's slogan — “safe health workers, safe patients” — could not be more timely as we work to take care of each other and combat COVID-19.

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