

## OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM



TO: HIGHLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY  
FROM: RANDAL LENNARTZ, PRESIDENT & CEO

SUBJECT: COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE  
DATE: 01/13/2022

HIGHLAND DISTRICT HOSPITAL HAS REACHED CAPACITY. AGAIN.

As COVID-19 case numbers and hospitalizations reach their highest levels ever, Highland District Hospital is at peak capacity, again. Our beds are full with both patients who are being treated for COVID-19 and those who have other acute and chronic issues that need immediate medical attention. Additionally, our Emergency Department is seeing unprecedented volumes of patients seeking care- both emergent and nonemergent.

Because of the increase in patient need, our staff has been asked repeatedly to give more of their time and resources. They are exhausted yet determined. As an organization we can confidently and proudly say that they have unselfishly given their time and heart to our community and their fellow coworkers at the expense of less time with their own families. We are incredibly proud of our team.

We are not unique in facing these challenges. All aspects of our local and regional healthcare system are being impacted. The Highland County Emergency Operations Center team has worked diligently to plan, prepare, and implement aid for each stage of this pandemic. This planning has involved our county hospitals, the Highland County Emergency Medical Services, our area fire and rescue teams, the Highland County Emergency Management Agency, and the Highland County Health Department, all of which are seeing staffing shortages, and pharmaceutical, laboratory, and testing supplies depleted.

Furthermore, hospitals that we transfer our critical patients- potentially you, your parent, your grandparent, your friend, your neighbor- to are also facing these same issues. Although our partners within our region are doing all they can to help us, they are facing the same shortages and are at capacity, too.

Because of the influx of patients into our system at all levels, we must move staff and resources to our most critical-need areas. Therefore, beginning Monday, January 17, 2022, we will be postponing surgeries and endoscopy procedures. Any surgery or procedure previously scheduled after that date will be rescheduled for a later time.

To help us help you:

- Please only report to the emergency department if you have a true emergency.
- If you think you have COVID-19 and you want to be tested, please do not come to our emergency department. Please seek testing at your primary care provider office, any area urgent care, or your local pharmacy that is offering testing.
- Get vaccinated. Get boosted. Continue social distancing precautions. Continue to wear a mask. Our sickest patients are unvaccinated. We are currently seeing that only one (1) in 14 hospitalized patients with COVID-19 has been vaccinated.

As an organization, and on behalf of all organizations that have been called to help during this pandemic, we ask for your support and patience as we navigate the best way to care for you, our community.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randal Lennartz".

Randal Lennartz  
President & CEO