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NEWS FROM THEDACARE®
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THEDACARE EXPERIENCES RECORD NUMBER OF COVID-19 PATIENTS *System to Defer Non-Urgent Elective Surgeries, While Safely Providing Acute Care for Emergent and Chronic Conditions*

NEENAH, Wis. – Throughout the pandemic, ThedaCare has been committed to protecting health and safety, and keeping communities informed of the evolving situation and its impact on our region and at ThedaCare.

“Because of the dramatically rising levels of COVID-19, ThedaCare is seeing a record number of COVID patients in our seven hospitals,” said Lynn Detterman, Senior Vice President of the ThedaCare South Region. “Our current model predicts COVID-19 cases will continue to rise for the next two to three weeks as the highly transmissible Omicron variant spreads rapidly in Northeast and Central Wisconsin.”

Throughout the ThedaCare system, there are nearly 95 COVID patients admitted as of January 17, 2022, which is more than any other time during the pandemic. Nearly 80% of COVID patients who have been hospitalized or in the ICU at ThedaCare during the pandemic were unvaccinated.

“In addition to seeing a record number of COVID patients in our system, as well as continued demand for non-COVID services, we are also experiencing some of the highest absent rates of team members due to illness or exposure to the coronavirus,” Detterman said. “At any time in health care, it is not just about the number of beds a hospital system can create, or how many of those beds are open. The most important resource of capacity is caregivers. And we need our team members healthy and well to care for our patients.”

Adapting to the Situation

For nearly two years, ThedaCare has had numerous teams dedicated to working on planning and preparing to continue caring for communities with each turn of the pandemic.

“Every day, our teams respond in a rapid way, being agile to provide all types of care for our patients and families, and to protect the health and well-being of our community members and team members,” said Dr. Michael Hooker, ThedaCare Vice President and Chief Medical Officer-Acute Care. “Throughout the pandemic, we have been dedicated to caring for those with COVID in addition to safely providing acute care for chronic conditions and serious medical situations such as heart attacks, stroke, trauma and cancer care treatments.”

As part of the ThedaCare preparedness plan, the health system has made the vigilant decision to defer non-urgent elective surgeries, effective Monday, January 17, 2022, at all seven hospitals. All urgent surgeries, and those that are performed on an outpatient basis, will continue at this time. Surgery teams and providers are evaluating procedures on a case-by-case basis, working with patients whose surgeries can safely be deferred a few weeks.

Dr. Hooker noted several factors were considered in the decision to defer surgeries, including capacity, staffing and patient conditions.



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“This decision was made with the utmost concern to protect our patients, team members and communities,” explained Dr. Hooker. “Urgent and emergent care needs will continue to be treated at this time. Surgeries and procedures that can safely be postponed without undue risk to the patient or the patient’s medical condition, will be rescheduled when there is appropriate staffing to do the procedures safely.” If a patient condition changes, plans will be adjusted.

Care teams are working directly with patients to change appointments as needed. Those patients can expect a phone call from provider teams about changes to appointments and care plans.

ThedaCare will continue to monitor the situation and adjust surgery plans to best meet the needs of those served.

“We would like to thank our patients, families and our caregivers for their understanding and support of these necessary changes,” Dr. Hooker said. “We also ask for the community’s help to get the spread of the virus under control. In addition to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine and booster, ThedaCare recommends everyone wear masks and physically distance when you are with others outside of your household, stay home when you are feeling sick, and get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19.”

About ThedaCare

For more than 110 years, ThedaCare® has been committed to improving the health and well-being of the communities it serves in Northeast and Central Wisconsin. The organization delivers care to more than 600,000 residents in 17 counties and employs approximately 7,000 health care professionals. ThedaCare has 180 points of care, including seven hospitals. As an organization committed to being a leader in Population Health, team members are dedicated to empowering people to live their unique best lives. ThedaCare also partners with communities to understand needs, finding solutions together, and encouraging health awareness and action. ThedaCare is the first in Wisconsin to be a Mayo Clinic Care Network Member, giving specialists the ability to consult with Mayo Clinic experts on a patient’s care. ThedaCare is a not-for-profit health system with a level II trauma center, comprehensive cancer treatment, stroke and cardiac programs, as well as primary care.

For more information, visit thedacare.org or follow ThedaCare on social media. Members of the media should call Cassandra Wallace, Public and Media Relations Consultant at 920.442.0328 or the ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah switchboard at 920.729.3100 and ask for the marketing person on call.

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