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Headwaters Health Care Centre pauses elective surgeries

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The Ontario government has ordered hospitals to ramp down elective surgeries and non-emergent/non-urgent care activities.

Headwaters Health Care Centre issued a joint statement last Friday (April 9) from the hospitals president and CEO Kim Delahunt, and Dr. Peter Cino, chief of staff and vice-president of medical affairs regarding the decision.

?These requests from Ontario Health are in response to an increase in positive COVID-19 case counts and widespread community transmission of the virus province wide,? the statement reads.

?The goal is to preserve critical care and human resource capacity as we respond to Wave 3 of the pandemic.?

The order to ramp down elective surgeries was issued on April 8 and went into effect on April 12 at 12:01 a.m.

While non-emergency procedures will be decreased, surgeries that are deemed urgent, and cancer care will continue. The hospital's emergency department will also remain open.

In an email to the Citizen, Delahunt said Headwaters Health Care Centre has cancelled 175 elective surgeries and procedures this week under the order.

?Patients should be reassured that Headwaters Health Care Centre remains open and staffed for urgent and emergency care, including emergency surgical procedures. Patients, together with their primary and specialist physicians remain the lead decision makers for the timing of these procedures,? said Delahunt.

According to Ontario Health from March 15, 2020 to April 11, 2021 there were 480,030 surgeries completed in Ontario, while over the same time frame pre-pandemic 694,490 were completed. These include all oncology, adult non-oncology, and all paediatric surgeries but do not include cardiac and transplant surgeries.

Ontario Health says it is not possible to provide the number of surgeries backlogged due to the pandemic.

Patients whose procedures have been cancelled will be contacted by their surgeons' office or the hospital.

?These are difficult and challenging times and information is changing rapidly,? said Delahunt and Cino. ?Thank you for your patience and understanding as we all work together. As more information becomes available we will share it and we will continue to do what is best for those who work and receive care here.?

The order to ramp down elective surgeries went into effect on April 12 and will remain active for 14 days unless it is revoked or extended by the province.