

To: Bargaining Unit Presidents, Hospital Sector

From: Linda Haslam Stroud, RN, President



Date: June 17, 2009

Re: **MOHLTC Surge Capacity Management Program**

C: Board of Directors, Local Coordinators, Staff

On January 19, 2009, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) announced a provincial roll-out of Ontario's Surge Capacity Management Program. The MOHLTC has produced a standardized framework and toolkit for surge capacity management. It is intended to ensure there is a standardized and consistent approach in critical care areas across Ontario, and is expected to be fully implemented by 2010.

Surge capacity management incorporates standardized guidelines to manage minor, moderate and major surges. Minor surge is defined as "an acute increase in demand for critical care services up to 15 per cent beyond the normal capacity which is localized to an individual hospital." Moderate surge is defined as "a larger increase in demand for critical services that impacts on a LHIN/region." Major surge is defined as "an unusually high increase in demand that overwhelms the health care resources of an individual hospital and regions for an extended period of time."

The MOHLTC has provided a toolkit (attached), which addresses a number of issues that you need to be aware may be happening in your hospital. It is expected that hospitals take ownership and accountability for surge capacity planning, which becomes part of each hospital's overall emergency response planning, but with a specific focus on meeting the needs of critically ill patients.

Part of the planning is to enhance communication with all areas and departments to identify "champions" from certain areas of the hospital. One of these "champions" is organized labour representatives (page 12 of the toolkit). Also identified in the toolkit are areas dealing with human resources management. This is found under objective 7 on page 19 of the toolkit. This area is critical for union leaders to monitor to ensure that ONA's collective agreement is respected and followed.

Next Steps for Bargaining Unit Leaders

1. Review the toolkit.
2. Raise the toolkit and subject at Hospital Association Committees.
3. We recommend that a member of the executive, if not the Bargaining Unit President, sit on the committee to monitor the plan and ensure ONA's collective agreement is not violated.
4. Keep your members and Labour Relations Officer (LRO) up to date on the surge capacity planning process.
5. Follow up with your LRO if the collective agreement is impacted, and to determine if grievances are to be filed.
6. Review our hallway nursing position that can be found on our web.

If you have any questions concerning this memo, speak to your Labour Relations Officer.