



This communication is intended to provide timely and important information to our municipal leaders, health system partners, health and hospital foundations, and other community based organizations. Please feel free to distribute among your stakeholders as appropriate.

I wear a mask. Do you?

A message from Dr. Susan Shaw, SHA Chief Medical Officer

My favorite mask is soft grey cotton with stars printed on it. It's just one of many that I've added to a growing collection over the past few months.

This is not the same mask I wear at the hospital when caring for patients. It's my personal mask that I take with me everywhere: the grocery store, the mall, the coffee shop, anywhere I might find myself in a situation where physical distancing is not possible.

Why?

Because as a healthcare worker, I understand firsthand the devastating effects that COVID-19 can have on my family and friends. I see it every time a patient is admitted to hospital with symptoms and tests positive for the virus. I feel it when this same patient is transferred to my intensive care unit with life threatening complications from the disease. I experience it when my patient is too sick to recover and dies despite our care. As healthcare workers, we know that COVID-19 is real and COVID-19 is everywhere. We understand the implications, the devastation, the heartbreak that it can and does cause.

That's why it is so important for us as healthcare workers to lead by example; to wear our masks at work to protect ourselves and our patients, and to wear our non-medical masks in public to protect each other. This virus has changed the way we work and it must change the way we live. It must encourage us to be more vigilant with our hand hygiene, to limit our gathering sizes, to know who is in our bubble, and to wear a mask when we're unable to maintain 2 metres of separation between ourselves and others.

When we leave our workplaces, let's not forget how simple and effective wearing a mask can be. Let's encourage our families, friends and acquaintances to be safe by leading by example.

My favourite mask is soft grey cotton with stars printed on it, and I wear it most frequently when grocery shopping. Share what's unique about your mask on Facebook and Twitter with the hashtags #besafe #wearamask.

Find the do's and don'ts of wearing a mask [here](#).



Dr. Shaw wearing her KISS rock band mask, one of many in her collection.



Cultural Awareness Training now a part of Staff Orientation

Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is committed to creating an inclusive health care system that responds respectfully and effectively to the needs of First Nations and Métis people.

Part of establishing a culturally responsive system includes building awareness amongst all staff of First Nations and Métis history, treaties, culture and traditions through cultural responsiveness training.

In 2019-20, 95 per cent of newly hired employees – about 3,000 staff -- received the training as part of workplace orientation. The initial target, included in SHA's business plan for the past fiscal year, was 50 per cent.

"Improving cultural awareness is part of the commitment by the SHA executive and Board to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, which includes an appeal for cultural competency training for all health care professionals," said Gabe Lafond, Executive Director of First Nations and Métis Health for the SHA.

"Through the training, you're acknowledging the contributions of First Nations and Métis staff, physicians, patients, families and partners," he said. "It leads to a better understanding of a way of life, and of language and beliefs, and it strengthens relationships and partnerships with First Nations and Métis communities."

Creating a more culturally responsive organization leads to more culturally safe care, he continued.

"It improves the ability of individuals and systems to respond to Indigenous Peoples in a manner that preserves their dignity while, at the same time, improves their access to services, their quality of care and, ultimately, their health outcomes."

The course content, which also includes a section on dispelling misconceptions, has been validated by SHA's First Nations and Métis partners.

First Nations and Métis Health is working with Human Resources to capture the total number of SHA staff who have received the training. Two-thirds of former health region staff have taken some form of instruction.

In addition to the cultural responsiveness training provided at orientation, First Nations and Métis Health offers sessions on cultural conversations, provides information on topics including Truth and Reconciliation, creating an ethical space, trauma informed care, health equity and cultural safety, and facilitates the KAIROS blanket exercise.

The SHA formally committed to fulfilling the health Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on March 7, 2019. This work involves both recognizing the harms of the past and fostering meaningful and constructive relationships with our partners to develop programs and services that will work towards improving the health of Indigenous people.

This commitment includes embedding First Nations and Métis leadership throughout the organization, achieving a representative workforce, systemically using the wisdom of Elders, creating supports to help Indigenous patients, clients and residents navigate the health care system, fostering long-term partnerships by, for example, signing memorandums of understanding with First Nations and Métis leadership, and creating a culturally safe environment where all patients receive high-quality, safe, inclusive care that's free from harm.



Lafond applauds SHA's leadership for working with First Nations and Métis to achieve Truth and Reconciliation. "I want to recognize the commitment of our CEO and our Executive Leadership Team. They are truly committed to this process."

Service Resumption

As Saskatchewan Health Authority services resume, notifications will be updated on the SHA website. The list on our web page is updated regularly, however service impacts at our facilities can change and these changes may not immediately be reflected on our page. We encourage you to phone in advance before travelling to any facility to confirm the services that are available.

[View all service resumptions on the SHA website.](#)

Organ Donor Program marks 30 years with riverbank dedication



2019 marked thirty years of organ donation in Saskatchewan health care.

To celebrate this special occasion, the Saskatchewan Health Authority donor program purchased a dedicated green space in a scenic Saskatoon park to honour donors and their families over the last three decades.

Located in Meewasin Park adjacent to Royal University Hospital and the South Saskatchewan River, the spot is publicly accessible and includes a silver maple tree, a commemorative plaque, and a bench—perfect for taking in the sights and sounds of the scenic river valley.

"We don't often get the chance to say 'thank you' to families for their gifts, or to the donors themselves for their gifts of life or sight," said Rene Keller, co-ordinator for the SHA donor program.

"We thought that having this site near our city's beautiful river as a dedication or a memorial to those people would be perfect. It's right behind one of our main hospitals, and it's a place for not only donor families and ourselves to come, but it's a place for the public to come and reflect and say 'thank you' to the gifts that were given."

Meewasin Valley Authority held its annual dedication ceremony in June, highlighting this donation. This year's ceremony was held virtually via Meewasin's YouTube channel.

[View the story on the Saskatchewan Health Authority website.](#)



What to expect when visiting long-term and acute care sites

With the implementation of a new family presence policy in long-term care homes and acute care facilities, Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is reminding family and support people to take care when spending time with their loved ones.

“These past few months have been extremely difficult for LTC residents and their families as the pandemic has restricted them from being together as they choose,” said Christina Denysek, executive director of Continuing Care for the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA). “I am sure there is a longing to have the freedom to embrace, hold hands and once again enjoy the closeness of loved ones. It is imperative however to continue to keep everyone healthy and safe. Residents and their families are being asked to please remain committed to physical distancing and infection prevention and control measures.”

Under the new [SHA Family Presence Policy](#), patients, clients and residents can identify two family members or support people. One family member or support person can be present in the facility or home at a time.

If you have been identified as a family member or support person:

- You and your loved one will be contacted by the facility regarding procedures for organizing indoor visits and continuation of outdoor visits.
- Upon arriving, you will undergo health screening.
- You will need to wash your hands when you arrive and before you leave.
- All family members and support people will be given a medical grade mask to wear. Additional personal protective equipment may be required, depending on circumstances.

Another option for additional family members or support people is to spend time outdoors with their loved one in long-term care. Outdoor visits can include more than one person at a time, provided physical distancing can be maintained. Physical distancing does not need to be observed among members of the same household. These visits are not limited to the two identified family members or support people.

Family members and support people are not permitted to wait in waiting rooms or other common areas and are asked to limit their movements within the facility.

During outdoor visits where no Plexiglas barrier is present, family members or support people are asked

to maintain a physical distance of two metres at all times. They will need to wear a mask except in circumstances where the mask is a barrier to communication and a two-meter distance can be maintained. Masks will be required at all times during an outdoor visit if the family member or support person has been to an area of concern in the last 14 days.

In some instances, the family member or support person may not be able to wear a mask. Examples include but are not limited to: allergies, claustrophobia and children under the age of two or children who won't keep masks on. In these cases, the home will work with the family member or support person to determine alternate approaches to support safe visits, depending on the situation. Possible alternatives include wearing a personal mask, such as a cloth mask, and maintaining a physical distance from others of a minimum of two metres at all times.



Masks will be required in instances where physical distancing is difficult to maintain, such as assisting in the personal care or feeding of a loved one.

“The current circumstances have been very difficult for our residents and families,” said Felecia Watson, executive director of Patient and Client Experience. “We appreciate the efforts our staff are making to reconnect residents and their loved ones in a safe environment during COVID-19. The SHA is continually assessing the impact of family presence restrictions and is committed to returning to open family presence as soon as it is safe to do so.”

The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of each facility or home and approaches may vary to reflect different considerations, such as community spread of COVID-19, home or facility outbreak status, facility layout not supporting physical distancing, availability of personal protective equipment or lack of suitable outdoor space for visitation.

Safety Drives Pace of Service Resumption

On March 23, the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) needed to pause non-urgent/elective surgeries, procedures and diagnostics in order to address the emerging COVID-19 pandemic care needs. Over the past several weeks, many of these services are now being re-offered.

“There are a lot of considerations to weigh when lifting restrictions,” said Corey Miller, vice president of Provincial Programs. These include establishing whether the transmission of the virus is controlled so that the service can safely resume, whether the system can quickly isolate and treat as well as contact trace for each COVID-19 case in the area, whether additional measures are in place to avoid contamination in care settings, if the risk of importing the virus has been minimized, and whether communities and businesses are prepared.

“The determining factor is safety,” said Miller. “We are reintroducing services in a gradual and thoughtful way that allows us to bring services back on line while implementing strategies to keep patients and providers safe.”



Environmental Services staff sanitize public touchpoints at Pasqua Hospital in Regina.