



ROSS MEMORIAL  
HOSPITAL  
Kawartha Lakes

# Ross Memorial Hospital's report to the community *It's Your Hospital*

## What is a 'patient surge'?

**RMH** monitors patient volumes in many ways: by the day of the week, time of day, month of the year, by infection outbreaks in the community, etc. This data is collected and helps the Hospital with long-term planning and scheduling.

At times the Hospital experiences a patient surge, which is a spike in the volume of patients entering through the Emergency Department. When more patients are being admitted in the ED than are being discharged from the inpatient units, the flow of patients is backed up and waits become longer.

Such a patient surge took place on Thursday, August 10th. By the end of the day, there were 16 admitted patients in the Emergency Department who were waiting for an inpatient bed to become available. The gridlock was such that the team informed partner hospitals that the Ross Memorial could not accommodate patient referrals or repatriate patients who were waiting to return to the Ross until the situation improved.

To accommodate these patients' needs, the Hospital opened unfunded surge beds and called in extra staff to help deal with the patient volumes.

Fortunately, the acuity of the situation in the ED was resolved within 24 hours, although timely patient discharge remains a problem.

At any given time, roughly one-third of the Hospital's beds are being used by Alternate Level of Care (ALC) patients. These are patients whose acute phase of care is complete, and they are awaiting transfer to the next phase of care, be it rehabilitation or long term care.

Enhancing our discharge procedures with standardized information for patients and their loved ones is helping, but the pressure on the system remains high.

The Hospital is working hard to ensure our patients and their families have a positive experience at the Ross. We also strive to make the Ross Memorial a workplace of choice.

You can help in many ways: with your patience and understanding; by supporting your loved ones through a hospital stay; and by asking questions to be better prepared for discharge. Health care is a team effort. We all perform better when we work together.

## Keeping our smallest patients safe

A mother safely delivers a baby at the Ross. A few hours later, while mom is asleep, dad decides he will take his new pride and joy for a wee walk in the hospital halls. In his excitement, he forgets that babies cannot be taken out of the Maternity Unit until they are discharged.

He is steps from the exit when an alarm sounds and nurses hurry toward them.

The alarm is triggered by the security band on the baby's foot.

Mom is wearing a similar band, which is synchronized with her baby's band. Any effort to hand a different baby to her, to remove the band, or to take a baby out of the unit triggers the alarm and alerts staff to a problem.

**This new security system went live in August. It's the latest in patient safety and will ensure the safety of the smallest patients at the Ross.**

"Our new moms need all the sleep they can get," says Michelle Sanderson, Maternity Unit Manager. "We hope this enhanced security measure will help them rest easy. It's one more way our team will ensure our babies are as safe as possible while in hospital."

## Patient & Family Resource Area

You've just received your diagnosis. The doctor explained what it meant, but the more you think about it, the more questions you have.

A new space in the upper level of the Hospital's main lobby will help patients and their loved ones to look up current information on health-related topics.

The Patient & Family Resource Area is equipped with two computers that provide links to trusted, evidence-based medical resources. There are also materials available about the Hospital and community programs.

The Patient & Family Resource Area is available to the public day and night. The computers block access to social media and sites deemed inappropriate in a hospital setting.

