

An opportunity to reflect on the past three years

Three years ago ? March 11, 2020 ? marks the date when the World Health Organization (WHO) shared with the world that coronavirus was a global pandemic. That news set us all on a path we would never have imagined. The WHO said it was, ?not just a public health crisis, but a crisis that would touch every sector ? so every sector and individual must be involved in the fight.?

Little did we know just how involved in the fight we would be, worldwide and locally. Anniversaries like this one are likely to affect us all differently. What affected all of us was the need to adapt. I want to recognize and thank you all for your courage and kindness through the fight we fought together.

Three years has marked so much change, and today, we continue to adhere to Public Health's infection prevention and control guidance.

We initiated changes in every aspect of our daily lives, we self-screened, learned to work and study with masks, and other personal protective equipment. We did all we could to protect one another and maintain physical distancing from people outside our household. We worked with our families and their needs, especially everyone with children in school or universities.

We temporarily closed our hospital doors to all but essential staff and physicians. This included pausing all activities with our volunteers and students. We also recognize the tremendous effect this had on our patients and families and our care teams. People connected remotely, sent e-cards and had window visits. We also followed Public Health directives about elective surgeries and procedures. We updated policies and procedures, got vaccinated ? and boosted.

Plexiglass barriers were installed, and screeners were hired. Many staff were redeployed throughout the hospital or supported partners in long term care, worked in our COVID19 assessment centre, initially in the tent outside and then inside our hospital. We managed through outbreaks. We set up a regional personal protective equipment supply system to support us and our partners within the context of a global supply chain challenge.

We received gifts of kindness from the community in the form of colourful expressions of thanks to frontline staff, food, personal protective equipment, supportive

appearances from first responders and car clubs. Monetary donations were accepted by our Foundation to support our COVID-19 efforts and to continue purchasing much needed hospital equipment. We also began our own staff recognition activities, including the much-loved kindness cart.

We worked with our community partners, Wellington-Dufferin Guelph Public Health, the local municipalities, Dufferin County, the Region of Peel and our Ontario Health Team partners to manage care together. We communicated as often and as much as we could. We experienced loss, disappointment, exhaustion, and burnout. There were moments of joy and discoveries from the newfound time at home, as well.

Our future ? learning from the past

We also learned so much from one another, about one another and about ourselves. The COVID-19 pandemic is not quite in our rear-view mirror. COVID-19 variants are still emerging, people are still contracting COVID-19 and it's likely we will need to learn to live with it as we cautiously head into the future. There are lasting impacts of the pandemic, including the use of masks and continued hand hygiene. The health system as a whole continues to face challenges.

Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, released a report earlier this week titled, [Being Ready: Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics](#). The report stresses the need to continue investing in public

health preparedness, to remember the hard lessons learned and the importance of being prepared before a pandemic hits. We are taking those words of caution to heart. Especially as we embark on our continuous quality improvement and readiness journey as a hospital and health system partner.

Thank-you does not seem to be a strong enough sentiment. Headwaters is the cornerstone of health care in our community, and all of the heroic efforts and unwavering support have served our community well. Thank you for your hard work and dedication. A heartfelt thanks to each and every Dufferin-Caledon resident for making personal sacrifices ? we know this was challenging. A heartfelt thanks to our staff and community partners for going above and beyond to continue to provide safe, quality care every day.

Yours in good health,

Kim Delahunt,

President & CEO

Headwaters Health Care Centre