

COVID-19 Update

Date: April 23, 2020
To: MUMC & MCH Staff & Physicians
From: Bruce Squires, VP Women's & Children's Health
Subject: **Support Persons for Labouring Women**

As we continue to respond to COVID-19 in our community, the safety of our patients, their families, and our staff and physicians at McMaster University Medical Centre (MUMC) remains our first priority.

We also appreciate the stress and uncertainty that comes with being in hospital alone, as we maintain a restricted visitor policy. This is especially true for labouring and postpartum women. Birth can be an anxiety-provoking experience, and research suggests that the presence of a support person during and after birth can lead to better outcomes for mom and baby.

Beginning April 24, labouring mothers who are positive or presumed positive for COVID-19 will be permitted one support person, such as a spouse or family member, during labour and their stay on 4C (mother and baby unit). To protect those in hospital from COVID exposure, this support person must:

1. Be asymptomatic.
2. Pass visitor screening at the hospital entrance.
3. Be provided with and don the necessary PPE upon arrival and for the duration of their stay, for their own protection and that of those around them.
4. Be supported in maintaining proper physical distancing and infection control measures.
5. Minimize movement throughout the hospital, and not have in and out privileges during the course of their visit.

If a patient's support person is unable to join them in hospital, we will make every effort to enable them to connect via virtual means (e.g. video chat).

As much as possible, patients will be notified of the support person policy in advance of their visit. Exceptions to this policy should be made in rare circumstances and at the discretion of the clinical manager. If a support person requires special accommodation due to a disability or otherwise, we will do our best to accommodate them.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me or speak with your clinical manager.

As always, thank you for your unwavering dedication to our patients, families, and to each other during this challenging time.

Bruce