

COVID-19 Update

Date: Wednesday, April 21, 2021

To: Physicians at HHS

From: Dr. Michael Stacey, EVP Academic and Chief Medical Executive
Dr. Khalid Azzam, Chief of Medicine
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Subject: **Emergency Standard of Care (ESoC) and Critical Care Triage Protocol (CCTP) - Awareness and Preparation**

There continues to be a significant effort at Hamilton Health Sciences and across Ontario to create much needed critical care capacity to address the third wave of this pandemic.

This is all occurring to avoid the most dire situation when the scarcity of available ICU resources might necessitate the use of the Emergency Standard of Care (ESoC) and possibly the Critical Care Triage Protocol (CCTP) to decide which patients will receive critical care and which do not.

As part of our pandemic planning and preparedness, however, it is prudent to ensure that we all know what to do in the event that this extreme measure is required.

ESoC and Critical Care Bed Allocation

The Ontario Critical Care COVID-19 Command Centre (OCCCCC) has created an Emergency Standard of Care (ESoC) to guide decisions in the event that hospitals need to begin to triage ICU admissions. Only the OCCCCC can invoke the ESoC based on a province-wide assessment of critical care capacity limits.

The goal of the province-wide ESoC is to avoid preventable deaths, and ensure equity and fairness in decision-making, by offering critical care to those most likely to survive longer than 12 months. If it is invoked, the ESoC will become the standard of practice for critical care admission.

This means that any physician working in an *adult* hospital ward, surgical ward, emergency department or ICU could be called upon to complete a Short Term Mortality Risk Assessment Tool (STMR) for any patient who may need ICU care. An HNHB Regional Triage Team will support the triage process and the allocation of critical care resources regionally.

We have started to roll out physician education and training related to the ESoC so our healthcare teams are prepared if triage is required.

CCTP

The CCTP can only be implemented by the OCCCCC in the event that the Ontario Cabinet approves an executive order to allow the withdrawal of care without consent. If this occurs, more information will be shared.

EDUCATION & RESOURCES

You are encouraged to review the provincial and regional resources below to familiarize yourself with the ESoC.

- Provincial critical care triage resources: [ESoC, STMR; Goals of care guides; scripts for conversations with patients and families](#)
 - The HHS versions of the STMR forms and policies (identical to the provincial forms and policies), are available in the HHS policy library (use key words “critical care triage” or “triage”). You must be in Citrix to access these policies.
- HNHB ESoC Implementation Guide – Package for Local Hospitals and Physicians (attached)

Related statements by CMPA and CPSO

- [CMPA statement](#)
- [CPSO statement](#)

Other resources

- Recording: [Adult Emergency Standard of Care for Critical Care Triage; Interprofessional Practice IPP Rounds on March 2, 2021](#)
 - Education resources at criticalcarelearning.ca
 - [Editorial by Dr. Andrea Frolic, Dr. Andrew Baker and Dr. James Downar](#)
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