

New beds for Quinte Health Care

By Sarah Sobanski

Quinte Health Care is getting 15 new patient spaces just in time for flu season.

The province of Ontario announced 2,000 beds and spaces to 'improve access to care for patients and families, and reduce wait times in hospitals, at home and in the community' in the last week of October. That's more than 1,200 additional hospital beds. 'The bed allocation will be decided in the coming week or so and will be based on the units experiencing the greatest pressures across our four hospitals,' Quinte Health Care manager for communications and community relations Catherine Walker told *Bancroft This Week*.

Just over \$1 million will fund 15 surge beds to help face capacity challenges and help ensure there is appropriate staff resources for the increased volume of patients, she said

'At QHC North Hastings Hospital the funding amount provides for six beds for the in-patient unit ' but we can, and do increase by two 'surge beds' as needed,' she explained. 'Surge is the term that is used for the times when we have more patients than we have beds available. The funding received in this announcement for additional surge beds is temporary and meant to help us cope with the upcoming flu season. This will help us cover-off the additional resources needed including staff and supplies to appropriately care for the anticipated increase of patients.'

According to the release by the province the remaining beds and spaces are more than 200 affordable housing units for seniors 'who need additional community supports when they are discharged from hospital' and around 500 'transitional care spaces outside of hospital for up to 1,700 patients who don't require care in a hospital.'

'As with many hospitals in Ontario, QHC has experienced unprecedented capacity issues over the summer months. Now as we face flu season, these additional dollars will aid in ensuring we can continue to extend quality care to our patients while remain financially balanced,' said Walker.