

Hospital Communication RE: Pediatric Capacity

Dear hospital partners,

Like most of the country, Oregon is experiencing a surge in respiratory illnesses. An exponential increase in respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) cases since October 29 alongside ongoing hospital staffing challenges are straining pediatric hospital bed capacity. Pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) and medical-surgical beds statewide are heavily strained.

Given the urgency of the current situation, and expected continued rises in RSV and flu cases, we ask that Oregon hospitals take the following steps immediately:

- Maximize pediatric staffing, spaces and supplies to increase surge capacity; examples include but are not limited to:
 - Identifying additional staff with pediatric experience.
 - Using single rooms as double rooms, with temporary licensure as needed.
 - Expanding into surge areas, with temporary licensure as needed.
 - Submitting a [Hospital License Temporary Space Application](mailto:mailbox.hclc@odhsoha.oregon.gov) to mailbox.hclc@odhsoha.oregon.gov for any hospital request to change use of existing spaces, add beds, or related requests. Oregon Health Authority's Health Facility Licensing and Certification Program staff will respond to all requests promptly.
- Encourage pediatric and subspecialty providers to maximally manage patients locally with goal to reduce need for transfer to specialty pediatric hospitals.
 - Develop plans and identify resources needed to manage higher acuity patients in anticipation of delays in transfers to specialty pediatric hospitals.
- Review and limit elective procedures if needed to maintain statewide pediatric bed capacity.

- Consider opening neonatal ICUs (NICUs) to suitably aged, outside patients using appropriate precautions.
- Plan to provide intensive care to older children in adult ICUs.
 - Assess readiness and activate any necessary credentialing steps
 - Review [PICU in the MICU: How Adult ICUs Can Support Pediatric Care in Public Health Emergencies](#) which outlines a surge continuum framework to increase PICU capacity.
- Maximize opportunities to vaccinate against flu and COVID-19.

As a reminder, [OHA rules](#) still require masking in most healthcare settings.

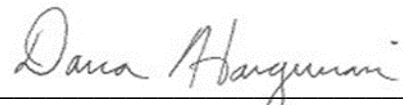
OHA plans to circulate a survey to better understand hospital pediatric surge capacity in the coming days and we appreciate your response in advance.

For any licensing or hospital regulatory questions please contact mailbox.hclc@odhsoha.oregon.gov.

For urgent hospital coordination requests relating to bed capacity please contact the Public Health Duty Officer at 971-246-1789.



Rachael Banks, MPA
Public Health Director
Oregon Health Authority



Dana Hargunani, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer
Oregon Health Authority