Outbreak Admission Strategies During the COVID-19 Pandemic
A Highly impacted Ontario Community Hospital System

Overview
• Overview of COVID-19 challenges
• Highlight practical approaches to admissions to units on OB
• OB Management Admission Framework and impact

William Osler Health System (Osler)
COVID-19 Outbreak Impact

Overall volume of patients transferred through GTA IMS by sending facility
Nov 16, 2020 - May 31, 2021

- Standard, scalable approach to manage IPAC issues impact hospital capacity and staffing included guidance on:
  - Patient placement and cohorting;
  - Outbreak management;
  - Inter-facility transport;
  - Isolation requirements for new admissions,
  - HCW exposure management and isolation requirements, and
  - HCW movement during COVID-19 outbreaks.

Considerations:
- Outbreak Evolution (VOC’s and community surges)
- Patient Population (specialty services)
- Rapid and PCR COVID Testing with electronic notifications (universal vs symptomatic testing)
- Utilization of CT Values (disease onset – old vs new infection)
- Hospital Capacity and Constraints (HHR and Surge volumes)

Outbreak Management Admission Framework (OMAF)
Outbreak Management Admission Framework

Provided specific guidance based on Osler’s capacity constraints including:
• Availability of beds (private rooms; ICU Capacity; ER volumes)
• Health human resources (staffing shortages)

Internal triggers (red/yellow/green) were utilized to calibrate outbreak management admission guidelines that:
• Reflected progressive organizational capacity constraints and
• External environmental conditions

New OMAF for COVID-19

• Developed in May 2022
• Aligned with GTA IMS/TR HOT
• Reflected Osler’s internal hospital capacity constraints
• Supported safe admissions to COVID-19 outbreak units
• Involved collaboration with Patient Flow and Admitting

New OMAF

The plan to admit new patients are made by the Outbreak Management Team (OMT) after:
• Assessment of the outbreak’s progress,
• Patient population and
• Level of hospital capacity constraints
Admission Guidelines Green – Usual Business

- No change to normal OB management process
- Unit closed to any new admissions
- No visitors or ECP’s
  - Exceptions EoL

Admission Guidelines Yellow – Moderate Strain

- OB unit closed to admissions
- Exceptions – specialty units
  - 2-3 cohorts (+ve cases-Existing patients-new admissions)
  - +ve cases transferred to the COVID unit
  - Cohort based on level of exposure
  - Use of COVID virally cleared patients
  - +ve rapid test & PCR test pending
  - No visitors
  - ECP’s – N95 fit-tested & Vaccinated

Admission Guidelines Red – High Strain

Same as Yellow except:
- OB unit remains open to admissions regardless of specialty/service
**The Results**

New OMAF demonstrated new admissions could be safely admitted if:

- Appropriate IPAC measures are implemented and FOLLOWED
- Collaboration with and support from Patient Flow, Admitting and the unit at the onset of the OB
- Clear direction and communication is provided to front-line staff

This new OMAF facilitated patient flow and helped mitigate some ER capacity challenges.

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**Toronto and Peel Regional Outbreaks**

Interpret with caution! It is challenging to compare data due to caveats and changes, such as:

- Changes in policies (e.g., declare OB over 30 v. 7 days & post exposure end date vs. 14 days)
- Reduced testing uptake among staff
- Change in PCR testing eligibility during Omicron
- Differences in practices/policies across hospital corporations

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**Osler’s Outbreak by Month**
Results

• Shortened the duration of COVID-19 outbreaks from an average of 19 days (April 2020 to April 2022) to 13 days (May 2022 to date)
• Maintained an attack rate about 22% during the multiple waves of the more highly transmissible Omicron sub-variant surges.
• Less outbreaks than other Hospital in our regions

Thank You!

Presented by: Donna Moore

Donna Moore
IPAC Manager
donna.moore@williamoslerhs.ca

Janine Domingos
IPAC Manager
janine.domingos@williamoslerhs.ca

Adenike Rowaiye
Epidemiologist
adenike.rowaiye@williamoslerhs.ca