



West Lincoln Memorial Hospital Facility Upgrades

Questions and Answers

(revised October 29)

Key messages:

- Patient safety is not negotiable.
- We are not closing the site and we are committed to its future.
- The West Lincoln Memorial Hospital (WLMH) facility needs upgrades to meet standards to operate all surgical services safely until the site is rebuilt.
- No decisions have been made on the date of the temporary move of some services from WLMH to other Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) sites.

Is HHS planning to close WLMH?

We are not planning to close the site. In fact, HHS has supported a site rebuild of WLMH. However, we have to keep the current building safe while we wait for the government to approve this rebuild. Our planning includes:

- Site infrastructure – \$7-million infrastructure renewal project has been approved to upgrade electrical, pipes and air handling. We are waiting to receive funding from the provincial government for the work to proceed.
- Surgical facilities – an estimated \$8.6 million and 27 months are required for construction work on surgical facilities to meet standards set out by Accreditation Canada. An application for funding and approval was sent to the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC) for approval last week. Construction would only begin once funding and approval are received.
- Site rebuild – We continue to promote the rebuilding of WLMH with the provincial government.

Has HHS decided that obstetrics and surgical services will move to other sites in January?

No we haven't. There is still much planning to be done in collaboration with HHS leaders, staff and physicians, including those at the WLMH site. However, no date has been decided upon for service changes. We have to wait for government funding and approval for any work to begin.

Once the services move, they will never come back to WLMH.

The condition of the building is forcing some hard decisions. We know the temporary move will be disruptive but we cannot ignore the upkeep of the building and risk patient safety. This potential investment of \$8.6 million for upgrades reflects our commitment to maintaining the site while we await the government's decision on the rebuild.

Is HHS using the matter of "standards" to justify the closure of the hospital or moving services away?

Ninety seven per cent of hospitals in Canada are accredited through Accreditation Canada, using standards that reflect current best practice for safety and quality. We hold all HHS sites to those standards and WLMH is no exception. We must maintain a safe environment in the current facility indefinitely until we have a timeline for that rebuild to occur. To that end, our surgical facility must be fully compliant with Accreditation Canada standards and other contemporary quality of care standards that we follow across HHS.

Could HHS use the money donated to rebuild WLMH for other purposes?

No, we can't. This money is held in trust by the WLMH Foundation for the redevelopment of the hospital and can only be used for that purpose. HHS does not control this trust.

Did HHS hide its plans for addressing infrastructure issues at WLMH?

We have been open and transparent with our staff and physicians at the site. There is much planning to be done with the support of HHS leaders, staff and physicians, including those at WLMH. More meetings will take place. We will continue to engage in dialogue.

Will moving obstetrics and surgery require closure of the WLMH emergency department, because anesthesia support might be jeopardized?

No. We are committed to continuing to provide emergency department services at the site.

Are you implying that the hospital is not safe by saying HHS is doing planning these measures to meet safety and accreditation standards.?

No we aren't. Standards are always evolving and they become extremely difficult to meet in a facility built more than 70 years ago. We moved endoscopy services in May because we had been advised that spaces to store the equipment used in these procedures at the site did not meet Accreditation Canada standards. Safety standards are not optional. We must meet them to ensure the safety of care at WLMH.

Is HHS moving services without considering local options to keep them going at WLMH or in the community.

We are exploring all options that would allow us to meet the required standards for quality and safety. There is still much planning to be done with the support of HHS leaders, staff and physicians, including those from WLMH.