

Southlake identified as Level III trauma centre



Southlake Regional Health Centre will be able to improve trauma care after being named a Level III Trauma Centre.

The new designation was announced by the local hospital on Monday.

As a Level III Trauma Centre, Southlake will care for medium acuity patients who have suffered traumatic injury, including wounds resulting from accidents, falls, sports injuries, violence, and other incidents that cause damage to the body's tissues, organs and bones.

While Southlake currently cares for an average of 500 medium acuity patients each year, formal recognition as a Level III trauma centre means they will be able to do so as part of an inclusive, integrated and accountable system that can call upon the expertise of leading trauma centres like Sunnybrook Hospital, SickKids, and United Health Toronto.

When patients come to our hospital, they know they're in good hands and that's a good thing because new patients enter our emergency departments every four-and-a-half minutes, said Dr. David Mackary, Southlake's Vice President of Medical Affairs, at Monday's announcement. Many of these patients come to Southlake because of traumatic injuries and in these moments they need the best care possible as quickly as possible.

This recognition [as a Level III Trauma Centre] reflects our commitment to the patients and communities that we serve. It also connects Southlake with an inclusive, integrated and accountable trauma care system that will improve patient outcomes and experiences.

When a patient experiences trauma, added Trauma Medical Director Dr. Leeor Sommer, time is of the essence in improving chances of survival and recovery.

That is where trauma centres really come in, said Sommer. Data shows that areas with Level 3 Trauma Centres have lower mortality rates because those patients have immediate access to care in the right place. Trauma Centres save lives. As a Level 3 Trauma Centre, Southlake now has connections to a huge trauma network, so we're working together with lead trauma hospitals like Sunnybrook, Unity Health Care, SickKids, to ensure all patients can receive quick access to specialized trauma care. Together, we can give patients the best chance of recovery.

As part of this recognition process, and to improve capacity within the healthcare system, six hospitals across Ontario met the criteria of Level III.

Stella Johnson, Director of Emergency and Mental Health at Southlake, said the Trauma Program will be led by highly-skilled teams of medical staff including surgeons, emergency medicine specialists and critical care nurses that are available around the clock to support needs.

As a Level III Trauma Centre, Southlake has made numerous changes to support the patients who present to our Emergency Department, said Johnson. We have hired staff to successfully implement the Trauma Program, its requirements and ensure that our operations are meeting and exceeding the Trauma Level III standards and that begins with our trauma team activation process. When a trauma patient arrives at Southlake or is on their way to Southlake to receive emergency care, the trauma team activation page will be heard overhead across our organization and lead to awareness amongst all our care partners that this designation has occurred and patients presenting will receive the best trauma care possible. This situational awareness ensures the team is also available and ready to provide life-saving treatments.

High acuity or very sick trauma patients or those with multi-system injuries will continue to be triaged here at Southlake and then transferred to a lead trauma hospital in the Greater Toronto Area, with one of our partner hospital sites as part of our integrated trauma care here in Ontario. This has not changed. Instead, what we are most proud of and what we can say has changed is the relationships we have been fortunate to build both inside this hospital and with community partners and with the trauma system at large.

Communication with our emergency medical services and individuals who we otherwise may not have partnered with have also significantly changed and improved for the better. This is just the beginning. We are so excited about our Level III trauma journey here at Southlake. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our partnerships with the Ontario Regional Trauma Network, with our lead trauma hospital sites, and continue to move forward in our journey as a Level III Trauma Centre.

By Brock Weir
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