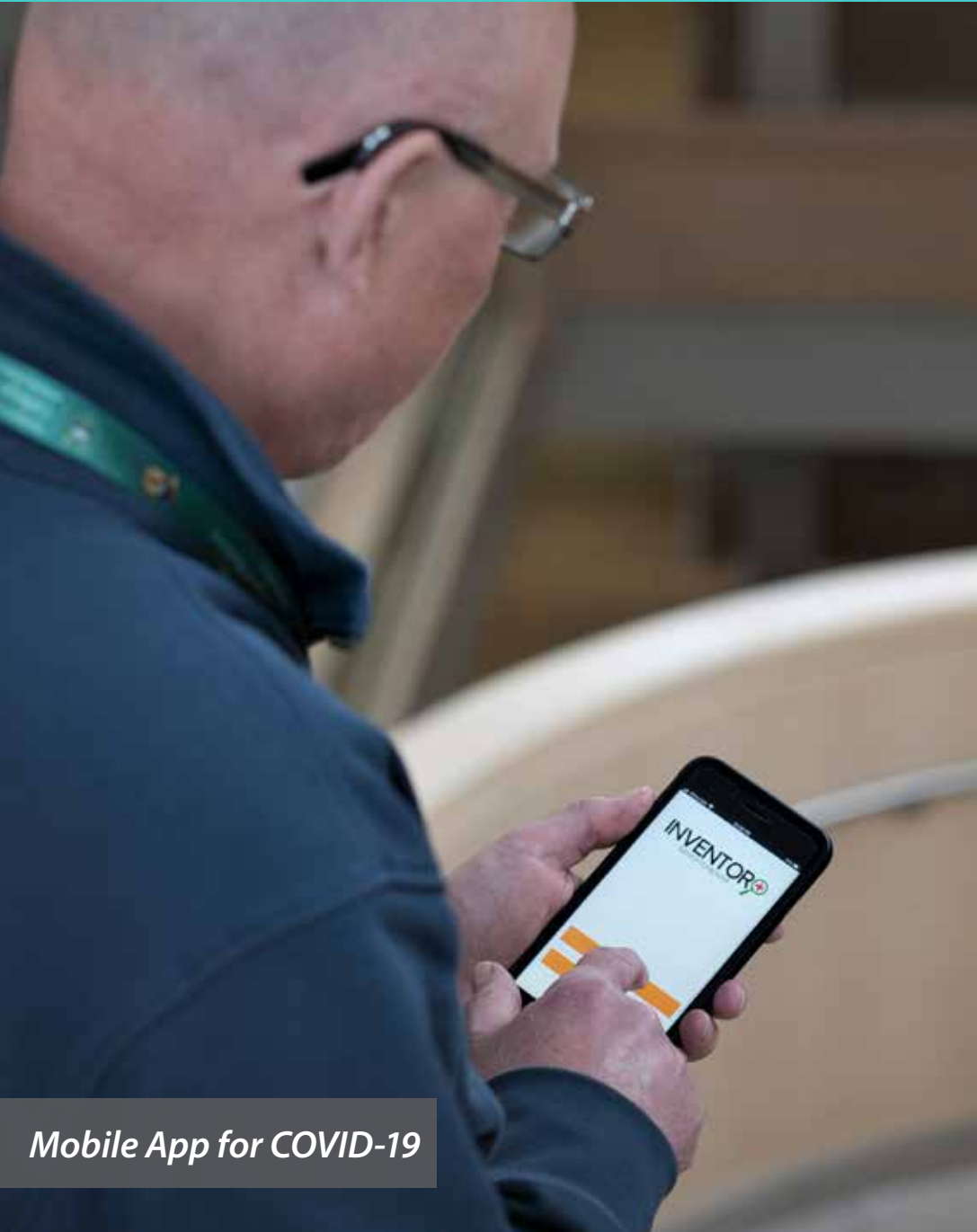


OPEN SKIES

COVID-19 Issue - Department of Surgery Newsletter

Vol.7 No.2
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Mobile App for COVID-19

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UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN



Saskatchewan
Health Authority

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



“The surgeons of Saskatchewan have demonstrated a high degree of commitment, compassion and integrity during this time of crisis.”

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant challenges to the health care system including our Department. In early March, we started to plan a rapid increase in acute care capacity to accommodate a potential surge of COVID-19 patients in our hospital system. The Department established a structure of decision making and communication to face the pandemic that has served well during the present crisis and will be a legacy for the future. The incorporation of Area Department Leads, Division Heads and our operational colleagues across the province into a cohesive platform for real-time analysis of pandemic information, decision making and rapid and effective diffusion of information to frontline surgical teams has been crucial to face COVID-19.

Over the past 10 weeks, the Department coordinated a provincial surgical approach to ensure the continuation of emergency, urgent and cancer surgeries. Guidelines for the postponement of elective procedures and the elaboration of a roadmap for surgery resumption were also critical tasks.

COVID-19 algorithms that ensure the safety of our patients and surgical teams were successfully deployed across all surgical sites in the Province. The Provincial Surgical Council switched into high gear to oversee the provincial surgical response and Division Heads were in constant communication with all Saskatchewan surgeons as the pandemic progressed.

The Department quickly developed and deployed a secure proprietary smart phone App, called **Inventory**, to have real-time information of COVID-19 status of surgeons across the province. **Inventory** also provides up to date information about COVID-19 cases in Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada. Surgeons have at their fingertips access to all the surgical COVID-19 algorithms when using the App.

I want to thank all and every member of the Department of Surgery, the Saskatchewan Department Area Leads, the Division Heads and our operational colleagues for their exemplary leadership during this trying time. The surgeons of Saskatchewan have demonstrated a high degree of commitment, compassion and integrity during this crisis. I am very proud of our Department, our health care institutions, our Province and all its people.

Sincerely,

Ivar Mendez, MD, PhD, FRCSC, FACS, FCAHS

F.H. Wigmore Professor of Surgery & Saskatchewan Provincial Head of Surgery

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Contributors

Dr. Ivar Mendez
Dr. Brian Ulmer
Mayra Samaniego
Christian Spana

Design/Digital Production

Department of Surgery
Communications

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY
College of Medicine
University of Saskatchewan

107 Wiggins Road, Suite B419
Health Sciences Building
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E5

TEL: 306.966.7323

FAX: 306.966.8026

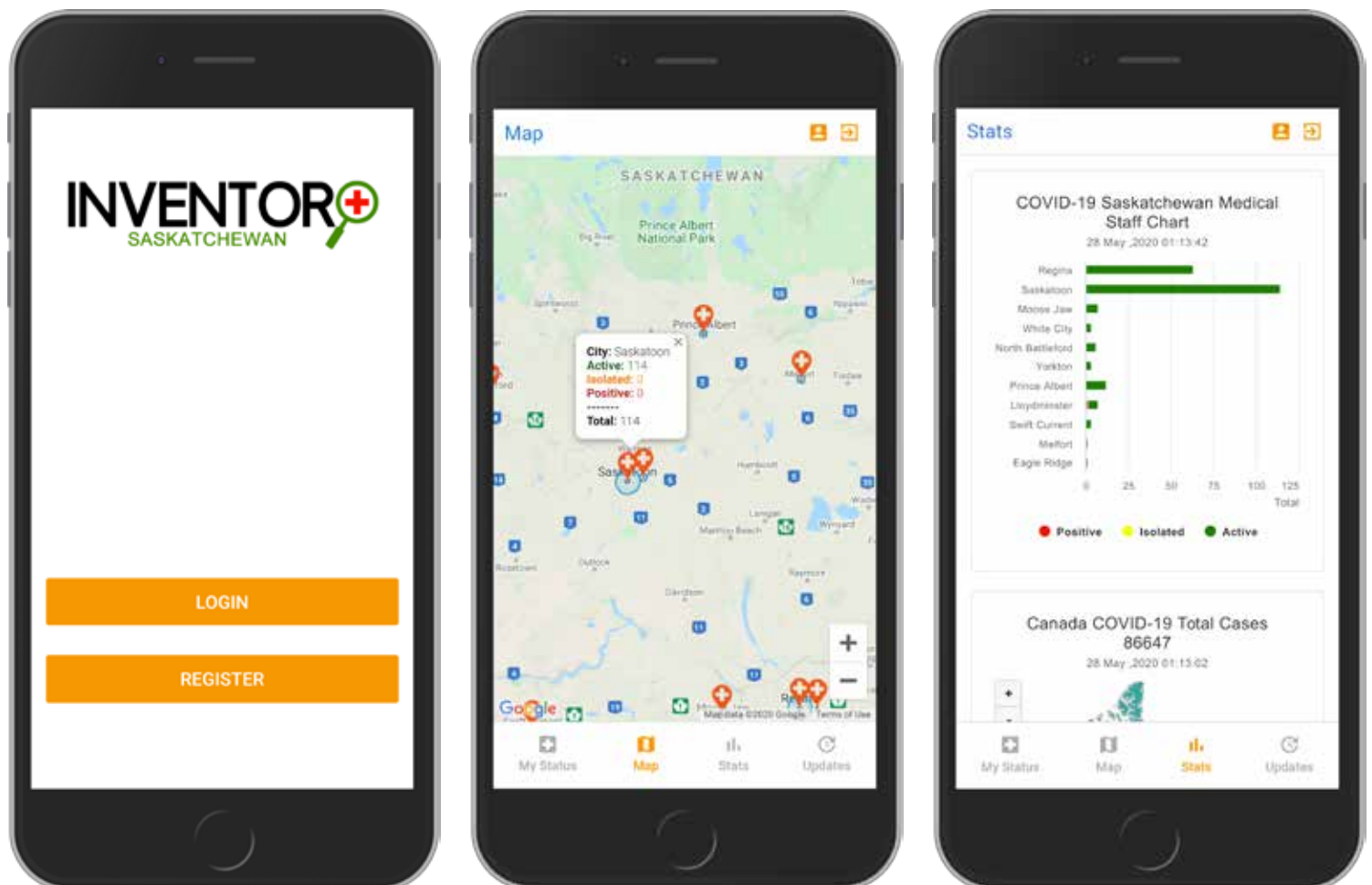
Email: open.skies@usask.ca
www.medicine.usask.ca/surgery

MOBILE APP FOR COVID-19

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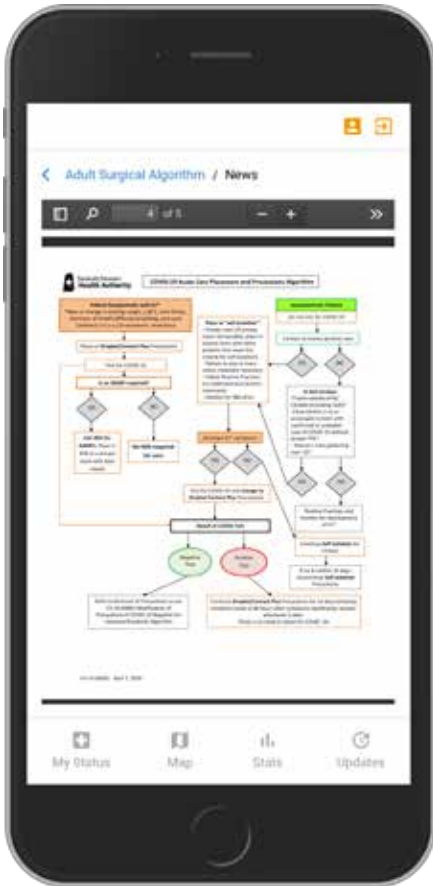
As directives for self-isolation and quarantine for health care workers were being established at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Surgery needed an effective system to know the COVID-19 status of surgeons in the Province. This information is crucial for the management of surgical manpower needs in the Province for all surgical specialties. The Department quickly developed and deployed a secure proprietary smart phone App, called **Inventory**, to have real-time information on the COVID-19 status of surgeons across the province.

Inventory was developed in collaboration with graduate students in the Department of Computer Sciences at the University of Saskatchewan. The App also provides up to date information about COVID-19 cases in Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada. One of the most useful features of **Inventory** is the access to COVID-19 surgical algorithms. These algorithms guide the surgical team on the use of PPE and other precautions as they provide surgical care to COVID and non-COVID patients. Having those algorithms at your fingertips has contributed to the safety of our patients and surgical teams across the Province. There has been a surge of interest for **Inventory** nationally and internationally and the Department is considering sharing the App with our surgical colleagues beyond the borders of Saskatchewan.



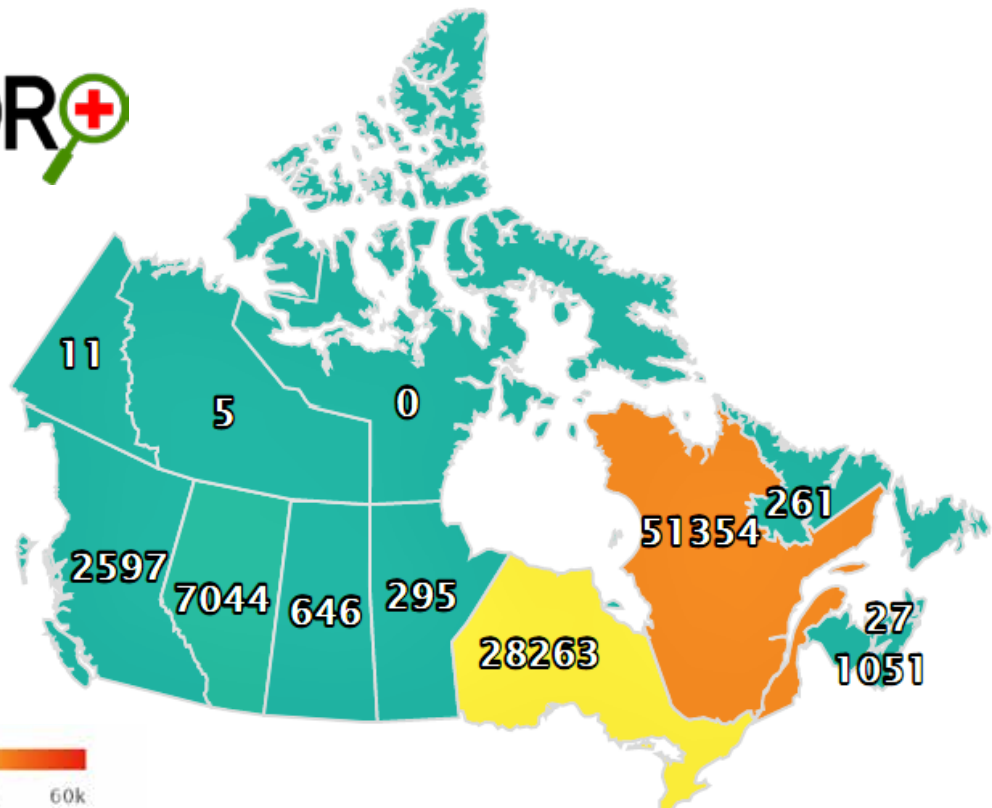
Surgical Inventory App

MOBILE APP FOR COVID-19



Up to date Saskatchewan COVID-19 Surgical Algorithms in the Inventory App

INVENTOR⁺





*Pre-COVID-19 Pandemic Photo at
2019 Face to Face Meeting*

*Left to Right: Drs. Ivar Mendez (Provincial Head of Surgery), Oladapo Mabadeje (Area Lead, Prince Albert), Joan Wheat-Hozack (Area Lead, Lloydminster), Brian Ulmer (Area Lead, Saskatoon), John Tsang (Area Lead, Regina) & Malcolm Retief (Area Lead, Battleford)
Missing from picture: Drs. Francisco Garcia (Area Lead, Swift Current/Moose Jaw) & Nashat Wanis (Area Lead, Yorkton)*

The surgical service coordination of the COVID-19 pandemic in Saskatchewan has been a standardized provincial approach from the start. The Surgical Council composed by all the Area Department Leads (ADLs) and chaired by the Provincial Department Head of Surgery has had a fundamental role in the provision of emergency, urgent and cancer surgeries to the population of Saskatchewan during the pandemic crisis. The council, in collaboration with operational dyads has worked diligently in providing guidelines, initially for the postponement of elective surgeries and now for the gradual resumption of these services.

The communication and implementation of the COVID-19 generated changes in surgical activity in the province has been very effective in all jurisdictions thanks to the cohesivity of the Council and the trust on its decisions by surgeons across Saskatchewan. This has led to an unprecedented degree of collaboration among all surgical sites in the province and a rapid response in supporting centers where COVID-19 outbreaks decreased or stopped surgical services.

The commitment of all Council members to innumerable meetings where 100% attendance was the norm, their willingness to work in common solutions and their leadership in their own areas has been exemplary. The Council has now opened a new chapter of collaboration with the establishment of combined weekly meetings of Area Departmental Leads and the Surgery Directors of all jurisdictions in the Province. This approach that brings together surgeons and operational leaders to find shared solutions will be crucial as we continue to manage the pandemic challenges and it will be a legacy for the future of surgery in Saskatchewan.

COVID-19 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Dr. Brian Ulmer & Surgical Executive

In response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, The Department of Surgery developed a rapid response Surgical Executive Committee.

The need for a daily decisive approach to operationalize all pandemic surgical initiatives soon became apparent. Membership structure was based on the existing SOC executive committee. Members from nursing administration are, Myong Younghusband Director Surgical Operative Care, Lilah Weinberget Director Pre and Post Operative Care, Cheri Kapell-Brown Director Inpatient Surgery/Trauma and Kim Fuller Manager of Surgical Booking/Waitlist. Anesthesiology is represented by Area Lead Dr. Kevin Laskowski. Following discussion with the Department of Surgery Division Heads and the Surgery Area Lead, four surgical site chiefs were recruited. Dr. John Shaw for RUH, Dr. Tony King for SCH, Dr. Richard Bigsby SPH and Dr. Elke Mau JPCH.

The committee's initial task was to develop strategies for elective surgical postponement and emergent/urgent/cancer surgery protocols. The committee was instrumental in developing work standards for COVID-19 perioperative and intraoperative protocols, surgery screening tools and the algorithms for operative management of adult and pediatric surgical patients.

It was paramount that the executive committee have a defined communication structure with administration, nursing and surgeon leadership. In Surgery, the executive surgical leadership meets weekly with the Department Division Heads and the Provincial Area Leads of Surgery. These two forums have provided an excellent mechanism for information sharing, strategic planning and implementation.

The executive has now started its phased approach in the resumption of surgical services. The committee will continue to coordinate a structured approach to assist the Department of Surgery through this unique time.