



**NHH**

Northumberland  
Hills Hospital

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# Senior Leadership Report to the Board

**Our Shared Purpose: People First**

**Our Values: Integrity, Quality, Respect,  
Compassion and Teamwork**

April 2024

# Connected care close to home

## Information booth returns to NHH for World Kidney Day 2024

Bob McKenzie, a local transplant recipient and Transplant Ambassador with the Ontario Renal Network (ORN), generously hosted an NHH information booth in support of World Kidney Day on Thursday, March 14. This was Mr. McKenzie's second such information booth at NHH, the first being in March 2019—the last public event on site before the World Health Organization declared the global pandemic—and we were very pleased to welcome him back with his very moving and timely message.

After developing kidney disease in 2014, Mr. McKenzie required dialysis treatment, which he underwent at NHH for nearly three years.

In 2018—four years after his initial diagnosis—Mr. McKenzie received a kidney transplant at Toronto General Hospital (TGH), which he credits as saving his life.

Mr. McKenzie's experience as a transplant recipient is what inspired him to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation. He is also passionate about volunteering with the Ontario Renal Network who supported him throughout his transplant journey.

"Following the transplant, my life has gone back to normal," said Mr. McKenzie. "I'm so grateful for the care that I received at both TGH and NHH. My personal experiences as a donor recipient led me to join the Ontario Renal Network Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) where I held the position of co-chair for five years. As a Patient Family Advisor, I have also had the opportunity to sit on several different panels that review best practices and strategic planning. I also volunteer as a Transplant Ambassador and visit dialysis patients who are either awaiting a transplant or exploring the option of organ donation. It's been a very rewarding experience to share my story and help others in their organ donation journeys."

Located beside the Main Street Bistro, Mr. McKenzie's March 14<sup>th</sup> information booth coincided with World Kidney Day and he used the opportunity very well to share his story and highlight the prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), the importance of education, and awareness around the risks of kidney disease, as well as the benefits of live organ donation.

World Kidney Day is an annual global campaign that takes place the second Thursday in March and was created to raise awareness of the importance of

kidneys to overall health, and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems. The theme of the 2024 campaign was Kidney Health for All - Advancing Equitable Access to Care and Optimal Medication Practice.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a non-communicable disease affecting 1 in 10 people worldwide and is projected to become the 5th leading cause of premature death globally, by 2040. Clinical preventative interventions to CKD include early check-ups, blood pressure and glycemic control, as well as management of co-morbidities such as cardiovascular disease.

For more information on World Kidney Day, visit [www.worldkidneyday.org](http://www.worldkidneyday.org), and for more information on TAP or to connect with a Transplant Ambassador, visit [www.transplantambassadors.ca](http://www.transplantambassadors.ca).

For details on the interdisciplinary dialysis services available today at NHH, including the team's outreach Pre-Dialysis and Nephrology Clinic for individuals with reduced kidney function, please visit [www.nhh.ca/Patients/PatientCareServices/OutpatientCare/Dialysis](http://www.nhh.ca/Patients/PatientCareServices/OutpatientCare/Dialysis)

### **Positive feedback following February 26 meet and greet with NHH's virtual OTN care specialists**

As shared in our February Report, NHH hosted a Zoom 'meet and greet' for area physicians and nurse practitioners on Monday, February 26 from 7:00 PM-8:00 PM. Offered to NHH's medical team as well as the broader regional medical community, the evening event showcased NHH's growing virtual OTN care specialists including: Dr. Jason An (Rheumatology), Dr. Jessica Dobyns (Rapid Access Addictions Medicine), Dr. Britt Lehman-Bender (Rapid Access Addictions Medicine), Dr. Vanda McNiven (Genetics), Dr. Shawn Shao (Genetics), Dr. Karen Ho (Neurology), and Dr. Courtney Anne Scott (Neurology).

Following the introduction of each specialist, there was a brief question and answer period regarding the referral process.

Feedback on the evening (and the telemedicine program) was very positive and included the following email sent to NHH's Chief of Staff, and organizer of the event, Dr. Mukesh Bhargava from area GP, Dr. Michelle Long:

*Dear Mukesh,*

*Congratulations on the February Virtual OTN specialists Meet and Greet event. It was a great opportunity to put a face to the names of our new*

*colleagues. The Telemedicine programme at NHH has been visionary. It has greatly increased our ability to access timely care for our patients. I have been in general family practice in Northumberland for over thirty years and have never before been able to access a Neurology consultation within a month (let alone 6-12 months).*

*Thank you to your team for bringing these new, much needed services to NHH. I look forward to more specialists and resources being added. I believe this is part of the future of providing excellence in patient care.*

*Sincere thanks, Michelle Long B.Sc. M.D.*

### **Northumberland PACE Speaker Series hosts guests from Trillium Gift of Life to explore the 'Why, what and how of organ and tissue donation'**

In the lead-up to BeADonor month, recognized annually in Canada each April, the Northumberland PACE partners welcomed two Registered Nurses for a timely discussion last Thursday, March 28, on organ and tissue donation.

A Registered Nurse and Hospital Development Specialist with Ontario Health (Trillium Gift of Life Network [TGLN]), **Tiffany Lue** has dedicated the last 12 years of her career to the field of organ donation and transplants.

Starting her nursing career at Toronto General Hospital, Tiffany was responsible for care for organ transplant recipients pre-and post-operatively. Spending time with the some of the sickest patients in Canada was a humbling and inspiring experience, as she learned about their transplant journeys.

Her passion for innovation in donation and transplant led Tiffany to obtain a Master of Nursing and continue her career with Ontario Health (TGLN). Since 2018, Tiffany has supported donation education and policymaking with the aim to improve donation processes throughout Ontario. In her current role, Tiffany supports patients and families as they generously give the gift of life through organ and tissue donation.

**Rebecca Masecar** is a Registered Nurse and Hospital Development Specialist with Ontario Health (TGLN). In her role as a Registered Nurse, Rebecca gained valuable clinical experience at the bedside in a Medical and Palliative unit, while expanding her knowledge about the process of organ and tissue donation. Rebecca's passion for leadership and education led her to complete a Master of Science in Nursing degree in 2020.

In 2021, Rebecca transitioned into her role at Ontario Health (TGLN), where she supports several hospitals in Southwestern Ontario and their donation programs.

Rebecca's favourite aspects of this role include working with hospitals as they support organ and tissue donors while providing education to health care teams and the public about donation.

Tiffany and Rebecca's virtual discussion on Thursday, March 28, explored important questions about tissue and organ donation, including **“Why is organ and tissue important?” “Who can donate tissues or organs?” “What are the common misconceptions about organ and tissue donation?”** and **“If someone decides they want to be an organ and tissue donor, what is the next step?”**

Lasting an hour in length, each PACE talk consists of a 30-minute talk, a 20-minute question-and-answer period with the guest speaker(s) and a short moderator summary. Recordings of previous talks are shared at [www.pacetalks.com](http://www.pacetalks.com). Two further talks are planned this season for April and May. Watch for details in the coming weeks on [www.pacetalks.com](http://www.pacetalks.com) and the social media feeds of NHH and all the PACE partners.

## Accountable care

**NHH Infection, Prevention and Control team launching ‘We wear a mask’ campaign, reminds all visitors to please refrain from bringing in food/drink to share with patients in the hospital**

While the pandemic is in our rear-view mirror, COVID—sadly—is not.

As an important step in minimizing the spread of infection and possible outbreaks, all NHH staff, physicians, midwives, volunteers and visitors are still required to don a mask while in patient care areas, including Community Mental Health. Masking is optional in common areas and in areas where patient care is not directly delivered (such as the Main Street Bistro, administration offices and hallways outside of clinical spaces).

As a reminder of these ‘hybrid’ mask requirements in all patient care areas, and the reason for them, NHH is launching a spring communication campaign, **‘We wear a mask’**.

T-shirts, posters, and table cards for inpatient meal trays with the message “**We wear a mask**” aim to sustain support for and cooperation with the hospital’s mask policy for patient care areas.

While with us since May of last year, our hybrid mask policy is unfortunately still resisted by some. This friendly campaign aims to demonstrate the ongoing requirement in all patient care areas of NHH, explain why we wear a mask (to protect others and ourselves) and showcase our team’s cooperation in doing all we can to minimize risk to the patients and families we serve. A secondary message is also the critical importance of visitors not bringing food and drink (such as coffee) into in-patient rooms. Consuming such food requires the removal of masks and, as such, is still not permitted. It is very challenging for our staff and volunteers to monitor and enforce and this campaign aims to assist.

Visitors continue to have access to free masks on entry to NHH.

For details please see NHH’s [Visiting Guidelines](#) on [nhh.ca](#)

## Responsive and healthy work environment

### People Plan enters its second year

As we embark on the new fiscal year, NHH will also enter year two of its multi-year **People Plan**. Having a healthy, engaged, empowered and diverse workforce is crucial to achieving the four strategic priorities set out in our Strategic Plan Framework including that of **Exceptional patient care, every time for every person**.

This year, NHH’s HR team will continue their focused efforts on progressing their operational priorities under the four distinct, but related, People Plan lanes:

- **Talent Management**
- **Service Excellence**
- **Wellbeing, and**
- **Culture**

Crossing each of these ‘lanes’ are focused, interdisciplinary efforts on **equity, diversity and inclusion**, led by our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (EDIAC).

Finally, NHH’s **caring for the carer** and **check up from the neck up** strategies will continue to be prioritized, both of which were initiated in the pandemic but—

due to their impact and positive reception—have now become instrumental to day-to-day HR practices.

The competition for health human resources remains high across the country. Particular teams, including nursing, lab, diagnostic imaging, are proving particularly challenging from a recruitment perspective, making retention all the more critical.

Guided by its multi-year People Plan and our shared purpose of People First, NHH's HR team continues to evaluate its processes, practices, and policies to ensure that they remain aligned with the hospital's overall strategic priorities.

### **NHH EDIAC recognizes a wealth of cultural diversity in March**

In line with NHH's shared purpose of People First, our EDIAC committee once again supported celebration of a wealth of occasions in the month of March with a combination of awareness building through the March EDIAC News, internal activities and social media messages.

International Women's Day, with its 2024 campaign theme "Inspire Inclusion" kicked off the month of March on March 8.

The beginning of Ramadan, which fell in winter for the first time in 24 years, was also recognized. A time of spiritual reflection, self-improvement and heightened devotion and worship, Muslims around the globe mark Ramadan by fasting from dawn to sunset throughout the period as an exercise of self-discipline, self-control and empathy for those less fortunate.

On March 19 NHH recognized Nowruz (Farsi for 'new day'), an ancient festival celebrating the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere. More than 300 million people worldwide celebrate the Persian New Year, which has been observed for more than 3,000 years in regions including the Middle East, the Balkans, the Black Sea basin, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The Christian season of Easter, when Christians commemorate the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, was recognized on Good Friday (March 29) and through to Easter Sunday on March 31.

Thank you to all members of NHH's EDIAC team for the ongoing efforts to raise awareness, understanding and inclusion for all at NHH.

# Exceptional care, every time, for every person

## **NHH achieves new clinical patient safety milestone with Barcode Medication Administration rates**

Since the introduction of the Epic clinical information system in December 2021, NHH (and our regional hospital partners) have been working to achieve a 90 per cent rate in barcode medication administration. In March 2024, after many months of performance very close to that rate, NHH became the first in the region to achieve this milestone.

A critical effort to support continuous improvement in patient safety, the goal of Barcode Medication Administration (BCMA) is to make sure that patients are receiving the correct medication at the correct time by electronically validating and documenting medications. The information in the barcodes on the medication and on the patient allows for the comparison of the medication being administered by the nurse with what the Doctor or Nurse Practitioner has ordered for the patient. The Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada supports that consistent use of BCMA technology improves patient safety by decreasing the number of patients harmed by medication administration errors.

To recognize the milestone and the continued efforts to sustain this rate, NHH hosted a 90s-themed celebration on Thursday, March 21 for all staff, physicians, midwives and volunteers. Staff were encouraged to come to work that day sporting their best 90s attire and the treat of choice was a truly Canadian culinary creation: poutine. NHH's food services team distributed over 300 servings between the mid-day and evening service, proving the celebration a hit. Congratulations to all who supported NHH's achievement of this important milestone.

## **NHH collaborating with community partners in preparation for rare solar eclipse this month**

Weather permitting, on the afternoon of Monday, April 8, 2024, a rare total solar eclipse is expected to be visible in the lower part of Northumberland County, and our region will find itself, for a short period, in total darkness.

Caused when the moon passes directly between the earth and sun, casting its shadow on the earth's surface, the April 8 eclipse will begin at 14:06 hours and last approximately two hours. Complete darkness, when the sun is fully



covered by shadow, will be much more brief (under two minutes), and it is expected to occur in our region around 15:20 hours.

Due to the rarity of the event, higher than average visitors to the community are expected. The increase could result in higher than normal Emergency Department volumes. Eye injuries are also possible, as eye damage could result from looking directly at the sun during the eclipse without proper eye protection.

An internal working group consisting of clinical and non-clinical staff from across the hospital has been meeting with community partners to develop a plan to ensure NHH is adequately prepared. For NHH the plan includes up-staffing in select areas, and also adjusting the shift start and end times of selected staff in anticipation of high traffic volumes when the eclipse concludes.

Visit Northumberland County's dedicated webpage to learn more about the 2024 total solar eclipse and find updates. As always, NHH will be here to support the community as required.