



Senior Leadership Report to the Board - December 2022

Our Shared Purpose: People First
Our Values: Integrity, Quality, Respect, Compassion and Teamwork

Connected care close to home

NHH joins OHT-N partners in local call to action to preserve health care resources for those who need them most

In an effort to blunt the impact of respiratory illness in our region and preserve already stretched resources for those who will need them the most, Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) partners have joined forces with a Northumberland 'call to action' to help all—providers, caregivers and patients alike—manage what is shaping up to be a challenging few months ahead.

The OHT-N call to action has three simple goals:

- Help raise awareness of the rising rates of respiratory illness in our community
- Remind everyone of the steps we can take, as individuals, to minimize our risk of getting sick (and inadvertently spreading viruses to others) this season; and,
- Promote additional resources available—beyond primary care offices and the nearest hospital—if we are sick or caring for someone who is sick.

Simple steps OHT-N partners are recommending we take now to minimize the chances of serious illness and community spread of respiratory illness are as follows:

- Make sure you and your family members' COVID vaccinations are up to date, meaning you have completed your primary series and, for those 5 years of age and older, you have received a COVID-19 vaccine within the last six months of your last dose or infection. COVID-19 vaccinations can be booked locally through the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit website or by calling 1-833-943-3900. Many pharmacies and some primary care offices, including the Northumberland Family Health Team are also offering COVID vaccination. Learn more about COVID vaccines and where to get vaccinated.
- Get a flu shot. Flu shots are given to those aged 6 months and older. Learn more about where to get a flu shot in Northumberland County on the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit's website.
- Wear a mask when indoors in crowded public spaces and physical distancing cannot be maintained – masking is not currently mandatory in most areas of Northumberland County beyond high-risk health settings, like hospitals and long-term care settings, where special guidelines remain in force, but it is a small gesture that is known to have a big impact on

stopping the spread of germs. Surgical masks should be properly worn, covering the nose and mouth.

- Screen for respiratory symptoms daily and stay home if you are ill. What feels like a minor cold to you could be serious if transmitted to someone else.
- Wash your hands, often, particularly when out in public. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just washed your hands.

For the full call to action and links to additional resources, please visit the OHT-N website at www.ohtnorthumberland.ca.

Integrated Clinical Information System to mark first anniversary since go-live

Staff, physicians, midwives and volunteers at hospitals across the Central East region will soon celebrate the one-year anniversary of our new shared Clinical Information System (CIS), which went live December 3, 2021. To have achieved this at any time is something to celebrate. To achieve it in the midst of a pandemic, and to have fully funded our portion with community donor support, is something we are very proud of at NHH.

Each of the 1.5 million people in the Central East region who receive hospital care now have a single, unified, digital personal health record across the seven partner hospitals, which include NHH together with Lakeridge Health, Peterborough Regional Health Centre, Ross Memorial Hospital, Scarborough Health Network, Campbellford Memorial Hospital and Haliburton Highlands Health Services.

In addition to one digital record for each hospital patient across the partner hospitals, the new regional CIS has brought patient access to their clinical information with a new user-friendly and secure patient portal called MyChart to view their record and upcoming appointments. For our care teams it has enhanced the implementation of evidence-based best practices across the care continuum, improved timely access to information to support clinical decision-making, including test results, medication information and other essential health information, enhanced patient safety features, including barcode medication administration at the patient's bedside, and allowed for less duplication and more efficient processes, contributing to a more sustainable health system.

The collaboration represents the largest number of individual organizations joining together on a single CIS platform (Epic) in Ontario and while still in its early stages has already begun to transform the way health care is delivered for generations to come. The Northumberland community is in a much better position to align efforts of providers across the system with the new CIS as a critical building block.

Accountable care

Accredited with Exemplary Standing!

NHH has been awarded Accreditation with Exemplary Standing by Accreditation Canada, an independent, not-for-profit organization that sets standards for quality and safety in health care and accredits health organizations in Canada and around the world. The designation is the highest award available through the hospital accreditation program.

NHH met 100 per cent of the Required Organizational Practices set out for hospitals in six safety areas: Safety Culture, Communication, Medication Use, Worklife/Workforce, Infection Control, and

Risk Assessment. In total, NHH met 99.4 per cent of applicable 2,316 Accreditation Canada standards, the broader criteria and guidelines required to provide high-quality care and service.

Particular strengths recognized by the surveyor team included: the Board of Directors; the strength of NHH's community and community partnerships, including but not limited to its work with the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland; strong, dedicated leadership; the "compassion, passion and commitment" shown by staff in "going above and beyond to support one another and the patients and families seen at NHH"; the high degree of NHH Foundation and Auxiliary involvement throughout the organization; and, finally, the high level of satisfaction exhibited by patients experiencing direct patient care.

For more please see [the related news release](#), issued November 8, on nhh.ca

National recognition for NHH for environmental responsibility

As shared with our staff, physicians, and midwives at a recent virtual forum, NHH has been recognized by the Canadian Coalition of Green Health Care for its ongoing work toward energy conservation and environmental responsibility. The Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care has been working with health care facilities to share green health care best practices and to become better equipped to deal with the demands to be environmentally responsible health service organizations.

NHH tracks performance against key indicators also tracked by its hospital peers on a national scorecard maintained by the Coalition known as the Green Hospital Scorecard.

The Scorecard is the only comprehensive health care environmental performance benchmarking tool in Canada. It measures energy conservation, water conservation, waste management and recycling, corporate commitment, and pollution prevention.

In the scorecard year just reported (2021), NHH earned recognition in five categories, earning top prize for pollution prevention and silver recognition (2nd place overall) for Green Hospital of the Year (also a national award). In total, NHH's recognitions in the Scorecard are as follows:

- Energy – Ontario (winner)
- Pollution – Canada Wide (winner)
- Green Hospital of the Year (honorable mention, silver award)
- Leadership – Canada Wide (honourable mention)
- Water – Canada Wide (honourable mention)

Responsive and healthy work environment

Health Human Resource (HHR) pressures continue

NHH, like other hospitals and care providers throughout the province, continues to experience critical systemic health human resource (HHR) pressures with no immediate solutions in the foreseeable future.

To minimize the impact of these pressures our teams remain focused on those things within our own control as a hospital to do all we can to **recruit, retain and care for the carers**.

First, from a recruitment perspective, NHH is seeing positive results from its clinical internship program, a 12-week orientation program for new graduates that seeks to provide benefits such as

consistent preceptor, protected schedule and regular check-ins between the educator preceptor and intern. For many new grads who experienced their education in a largely virtual environment, the internship program has meant an additional supportive transition to clinical care that has helped build confidence, improve clinical judgement, and enhance skills on numerous levels. Three new graduates have completed the internship program and are working independently on our Medical/Surgical unit. Another three new graduates are completing their twelve-week internships with four new grads waiting for College of Nurses of Ontario licences and will begin their internships once licenced. At the same time, nursing students who have not yet completed their studies or examinations can gain valuable non-registered experience at NHH as paid externs, the goal being: these individuals will eventually graduate and consider opportunities at NHH over other less familiar organizations.

From a retention perspective, NHH's Human Resources team is continuing to implement continuous professional development opportunities for frontline staff and leaders. The Leadership Network development coaching sessions continue with positive feedback, offering a range of educational opportunities ranging from equity, diversity and inclusion to performance and coaching, brave conversations, project management principles, financial variance and reporting, the Ontario Human Rights Code and more. Another focus for NHH showing positive result is the active promotion of internal opportunities for upskilling, particularly targeting areas of high need within specialty areas. To that end, work is under way with our academic partners to formalize clinical 'laddering' opportunities whereby PSWs interested in advancing to RPN roles or RPNs interested in RN roles may do so, with financial support from NHH. NHH is advocating for provincial funding and support to enable the growth of these ideas, and scale them across other hard-to-fill HHR vacancies, such as diagnostic imaging as well as in-house support services.

While HHR pressures are felt across the health care system at all levels of seniority, leadership retention is emerging as a new pressure for NHH with many managers, directors and senior leaders giving voice to concerns regarding capacity and sustainability for themselves as well as their teams. Stable, skilled leadership will be key to sustaining the strengths underscored in our Accreditation Canada review and carrying forward our Strategic Plan Framework priorities.

NHH remains focused on developing and implementing strategies that create an environment of empowerment and engagement for all. Caring for the Carer strategies continue, including – in the coming month – a wellness week and other fun activities led by our Caring for the Carers Engagement committee, including our first anniversary celebrations for our new CIS, holiday door decorating, our annual staff breakfast and more.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Northumberland Hills Hospital's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion priorities continue to move forward through the hard work and careful thought of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Advisory Committee (EDIAC).

December brings a wealth of global EDI opportunities to recognize within NHH and on our social media channels, including: the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3), the National Day for Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (December 6) and International Human Rights Day (December 10).

In addition to Christmas, which will be celebrated again this year at NHH with a number of long-standing traditions, this month's informational message from our EDI Committee will also highlight Hanukkah, the Jewish festival celebrated over eight days from December 18 to December 26, and Kwanzaa, a secular holiday that was first begun by an African-American Professor in the 1960s to celebrate the rich heritage and values imparted by African culture around the globe. Kwanzaa is recognized for seven days from December 26 through January 1.

The growing diversity of our team and the patients and families we serve is something we aim to celebrate, explore and understand. One step at a time, respectfully and with an eye to sharing, we continue to work to do just that.

Exceptional care, every time, for every person

Patient experience measurement

NHH is committed to providing exceptional care, every time, for every person.

To help us know how we are doing, and to show where improvements may be needed to ensure a positive experience, an interdisciplinary working group is preparing to implement a new NHH Patient Experience Measurement Survey throughout NHH and our Community Mental Health offices this month.

Co-designed with input from a mix of staff and Patient and Family Advisory Council partners, the new survey aims to recognize the important role of caregivers by inviting input from the perspective of both the patient and their essential caregiver.

Names are not requested on the survey. Individual answers will therefore be confidential and will only be shared in combination with the answers of others to identify trends or key areas for further examination.

The new Survey consists of nine questions. All input will be secured, summarized and made available through existing reporting channels to program and hospital leaders to support continuous quality improvement.

An interim measure, as the hospital transitions from a former hard-copy survey process administered by a third party, the NHH Patient Experience Measurement Survey will be launched in mid-December. Patients and families will be encouraged to complete the survey in electronic form at the bedside, on the hospital website and in key waiting areas using QR codes. For those without access to the Survey through their own technology, iPads will be available to encourage participation and hard-copy surveys will be provided in key waiting areas.

We thank all who take the time to share their feedback.

NHH Patient and Family Advisor assumes Interim Chair, OHT-N Experience Partner Council

Lisa Van der Vinne, NHH Patient and Family Advisory Council member supporting NHH Surgical Services and Ambulatory Care, has recently accepted a new leadership role as Interim Chair of the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland's volunteer Experience Partner Council (EPC). Van der Vinne has served on the EPC since its creation. She began her new duties as Interim Chair in November 2022, representing the patient and caregiver voice at the OHT-N's Facilitation Council and Collaboration Council tables.

A member of the OHT-N's community engagement team engaged in regional strategic planning, Lisa was among the signatories of a November 17, 2022 [collaborative "call to action"](#) to Northumberland residents regarding the "triple threat" of COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza. She has also played a key role in regional strategic planning through the OHT-N.

For more information on Lisa find her full biography on the Patient and Family Advisory Council page of our website, <https://nhh.ca/AboutNHH/Accountability/patient-and-family-advisory-council/lisa-van-der-vinne>

Update - More Beds, Better Care Act (Bill 7)

On August 31, 2022, the new **More Beds, Better Care Act** (Bill 7) received royal assent. Bill 7 is one component of the provincial government's five-point plan, **A Plan to Stay Open: Health System Stability and Recovery**, meant to stabilize the health and long-term care sectors and preserve hospital capacity for acute care patients who need it most.

Bill 7 includes specific provisions for hospitals related to alternate level of care (ALC) patients and allows certain actions to be performed, provided that reasonable efforts had been made to obtain consent. Effective November 20, 2022, hospitals in Ontario are now required to discharge patients who are designated as alternative level of care (ALC) and who have been authorized for admission to a long-term care home. Hospitals are also required to charge discharged patients a standardized daily fee of \$400 for every day that the patient remains in hospital following acceptance into a long-term care home, beginning 24 hours after their date of discharge.

To date NHH has not issued any invoices to patients as a result of the new fee requirement. At the time of printing the per cent of patients designated "ALC" within NHH is 16 per cent, approximately 70 per cent of whom are designated ALC for long-term care. Discharge planning continues to be a joint effort at NHH, together with the patient, the family or loved ones they wish to involve, the patient's hospital care team, and community partners including Home and Community Care and area long-term care providers. Options for local residents awaiting a long-term care placement continue to be limited by capacity but NHH remains committed to working together on short- and long-term solutions to our ongoing ALC challenges so that all in our care receive the support they need in the most appropriate location.

Implementation of new patient entertainment system complete

NHH's new patient entertainment (TV) system has been in place for close to two months with early feedback proving very positive from patients, staff and families.

The new bedside units were installed in October as planned. All inpatient rooms and 22 common areas (e.g. waiting areas and inpatient dining rooms) now have access to the new patient-centred service.

Free of charge during the transition period the service is now available at a fixed rate, with rental options available by the day or for longer periods as required with discounts available for longer stay patients.

For admitted patients who move from one unit or bed to another during their stay at NHH, service is transferrable within the hospital. Patients (or their loved ones) may rent the entertainment service in one of three ways: directly on the bedside TV, online, via the vendor's website, or by phone, through a 1-800 call centre. Details, including a Frequently Asked Questions document, will be found on the Patients tab of our website, <https://nhh.ca/Patients/YourHospitalStay>.

NHH plans to monitor feedback through the new Patient Experience Survey process referenced above. Guidelines are also being established to provide compassionate service in instances where price is prohibitive and benefit is identified by a member of the clinical team.

As a special gift for those in hospital over the holiday season, NHH has directed the vendor to offer the service on all bedside TVs at no charge to the patient on December 24, December 25 and December 26. No action will be required of patients to activate or deactivate their service during this time, fees will be waived automatically and communication will be shared directly with the patients admitted at that time.