



**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**

February 2024

# Connected care close to home

## Two neurologists welcomed to NHH medical team

Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is pleased to announce the recruitment of two neurologists, Dr. Karen Ho, MD FRCP(C) Neurology and Dr. Courtney Anne Scott BScH, MSc, MD, FRCPC.

With the support of NHH's Telemedicine Coordinator, Registered Nurse Rebecca Rutherford, Drs. Ho and Scott will support local primary care providers and specialists by offering virtual neurology consultations through the [Ontario Telemedicine Network \(OTN\)](#) for reasons including, but not limited to stroke/transient ischemic attack (TIA), multiple sclerosis, demyelination, seizures, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, movement disorders, and vertigo.

Over the last several years, NHH has utilized the OTN platform to provide specialized services for patients close to home, while reducing wait times.

The OTN, one of the largest telemedicine networks in the world, uses two-way videoconferencing to provide access to care for patients in hospitals and other health care locations in a manner that is efficient and accessible for both the patient and the provider.

"We are excited to begin 2024 by welcoming these two neurologists to NHH's clinical team, and in doing so, continuing to make progress toward our strategic priority of connected care, close to home," said Susan Walsh, President and CEO. "Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Dr. Ho and Dr. Scott and thank them for taking this opportunity, through virtual technologies, to bring their specialized and much-needed expertise to patients in west Northumberland County."

"NHH has made a conscious effort in recent years to better connect local patients to specialized (and often hard to access) medical expertise through technology, specifically the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN)," said Dr. Mukesh Bhargava, Chief of Staff. "Building on past successes in mental health, rheumatology, and genetics, we have also been successful at enhancing local access to neurologists through OTN. The recruitment of Drs. Ho and Scott builds on that."

Dr. Karen Ho is a consultant neurologist serving inpatient, remote and outpatient neurologic populations. She has practiced as a general neurologist for nine years, while running a busy ambulatory practice in addition to

teaching medical students.

She completed both her Doctor of Medicine and training in adult neurology at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Prior to medical school, Dr. Ho also earned an Honours Bachelor of Science in Immunology with High Distinction from the University of Toronto.

"I am excited to be joining the NHH medical team through the Ontario Telemedicine Network Clinic (OTN)," said Dr. Ho. "My priorities as a specialist have always been to provide excellent and compassionate clinical care. I look forward to supporting the patients of west Northumberland County and expanding treatment options for neurological diseases within this growing community."

Dr. Courtney Anne Scott is a neurologist who specializes in general and vascular neurology. Since 2017, Dr. Scott has worked at Mackenzie Health, a district stroke centre, in Richmond Hill, Ontario.

She completed both her Doctor of Medicine and neurology residency at University of Toronto, while serving as the Chief Resident in her final year. In addition to her medical training, Dr. Scott completed a fellowship in Vascular Neurology at Boston Medical Center.

"I am thankful for the warm welcome to Northumberland Hills Hospital and Northumberland County," said Dr. Scott. "Through my work with the OTN clinic, I am looking forward to collaborating with area providers to better support patients with general and vascular neurological conditions," said Dr. Scott.

Referring providers complete the NHH Clinical Telemedicine Consult Request and patients are scheduled and notified of their appointment, and any specific details, by the NHH OTN nurse. For a list of virtual services being offered through NHH, visit:

<https://nhh.ca/Patients/PatientCareServices/virtual-care>.

### **Virtual meet and greet with NHH's virtual OTN care specialists**

On Monday, February 26 from 7:00 PM-8:00 PM, NHH will be hosting a Zoom 'meet and greet' for area physicians and nurse practitioners. Offered to NHH's medical team as well as the broader regional medical community, through the Ontario Health Network, the event will showcase NHH's virtual OTN care specialists including: Dr. Jason An (Rheumatology), Dr. Jessica Dobyms (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 will be a brief question and answer period regarding the referral process.

### **Northumberland PACE Speaker Series hosts January virtual conversation, 'Why eliminating homelessness should matter to everyone'**

The Northumberland PACE Speakers Series hosted its January virtual conversation, 'Why eliminating homelessness should matter to everyone,' on **Thursday, January 25** with two guest speakers from the London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) in London, Ontario: Jacklyn Pearce, Occupational Therapist and Executive Director for the Office of Health System Transformation, and Dr. Daniel Pepe, Family Physician.

Growing up in Northern Ontario, Jacklyn learned first-hand the importance and value of community to an individual's resiliency and spirit. Jacklyn applies her talents as an Occupational Therapist to help build everyone's capacity to solve complex problems by helping them to walk the path to solutions one step at a time. She is passionate about building inclusive communities, where every person has a place, purpose, and voice.

Dr. Daniel Pepe is a Family Physician and physician lead for the Office of Health System Transformation at London Health Sciences Centre, in addition to running a busy family practice in London, Ontario with his wife and team. Dr. Pepe sees the art of the possible in the toughest of challenges and believes that if you do the right thing for each person you see, then success naturally follows.

With over 150 registrants, Jacklyn and Dr. Pepe's virtual discussion explored important questions about homelessness, including **"Why the path to becoming homeless is a winding road, filled with many dead ends"** and **"What the impacts of homelessness are for you and your community."** They will also share their insights into how communities can start building bridges to end homelessness and create a blueprint for shifting hearts and minds.

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). The recording of the latest session is being prepared by our student partners at Loyalist College and should be available later this month!

## **NHH's Health Professions Scholarship program**

NHH is accepting applications for the annual Health Professions Scholarships.

Introduced by the hospital in 2003, the purpose of the scholarship program is to provide financial assistance to students from west Northumberland who are pursuing a career in the health care sector.

Applicants are evaluated on the basis of their academic achievements, extra-curricular activities, a testimonial explaining their interest in a health-care field and written references. All applicants must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a full-time study program.

By supporting local students with their academic studies, NHH hopes to encourage community residents to consider NHH in their career path when the time comes to select an employer.

Applications are accepted throughout the year. Find details on how to apply under the Careers tab, Student Scholarship section of the hospital website [here](#).

A promotional campaign is planned for February 2024 to remind area students (and their families) and raise awareness of this year's deadline for applications, which is March 29, 2024.

As per tradition, the recipients of the Health Professions Scholarship awards will be announced in June.

## **Accountable care**

### **NHH recognized nationally for environmental responsibility by the Canadian Coalition of Green Health Care**

NHH has once again been recognized on a national level 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 works with health care facilities to share green health care best practices and to support organizations interested in enhancing their environmental responsibility and becoming better equipped to deal with the unique challenges facing health service organizations.

To be considered for the Green Health Care Awards, NHH was required to track its performance against key indicators also measured by 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, measuring energy conservation, water conservation, waste management and recycling, corporate commitment, and pollution prevention.

In total, NHH's recognitions in the 2022 Green Hospital Scorecard are as follows:

- Water Excellence
- Waste Management
- Leadership

“As we experience first-hand the evidence of climate change, it is vitally important to continue making a conscious effort to protect the environment through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions,” said Susan Walsh, President and CEO. “NHH remains committed to always improving energy and water usage at our hospital through innovative solutions that not only maintain a continuum of operations and services, but are also environmentally sustainable.”

“We are honoured for NHH to be recognized alongside our peers on a national level, by the Canadian Coalition of Green Health Care for environmental responsibility,” said Chad Gyorfi, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at NHH. “These awards are a testament to the dedication of our facilities and engineering team, who work hard to reduce NHH's overall carbon footprint by continually prioritizing greener solutions for the hospital.”

To learn more about the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care, please visit <https://greenhealthcare.ca/ghs/>.

### **New chillers delivered to NHH on Tuesday, January 23**

NHH's new chillers—the large units that deliver air conditioning throughout the building—were delivered on Tuesday, January 23.

Hospitals rely on careful temperature and humidity controls to ensure consistent, comfortable air temperatures at all times of the year as well as the safe management of sensitive equipment.

Installation will be completed over the next month with the plan on track to have our new chillers fully installed and on-line for the 2024 cooling season.

## **New Multi-Year Accessibility Plan completed**

NHH is committed to treating all people in a manner that respects individual dignity and independence. As such, we are committed to ensuring persons with disabilities have equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the health care services we provide.

NHH is dedicated to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, maintaining compliance with accessibility standards and preventing or removing barriers to accessibility wherever possible. A Multi-Year Accessibility Plan guides our actions. Developed with guidance from NHH's **Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC)**, and the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**, 2005, a link to NHH's new [2024-2028 Accessibility Plan](#) will be found under the Accountability tab of our public website, under Accessibility.

Questions regarding accessibility at NHH, or requests for a copy of our new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in an alternate format? Please contact Chuck Cudmore, Director, Plant Operations (905-372-6811, ext. 7774) or Lola Obomighie, Vice President, People, Culture & Organizational Effectiveness (905-372-6811, ext. 4019) or email [ASkHR@nhh.ca](mailto:ASkHR@nhh.ca)

Annual updates on progress and key actions will be published moving forward, in alignment with reporting to the JOHSC and NHH Board of Directors.

## **Responsive and healthy work environment**

### **NHH celebrates Black History Month in February**

In line with NHH's shared purpose of People First and in alignment with the hospital's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion agenda, the EDIAC committee will once again celebrate and recognize Black History Month in February as an opportunity to increase awareness and the many achievements and contributions of Black Canadians and their communities who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada a culturally diverse, compassionate, and prosperous country.

On Thursday, February 15 from 12:00 PM-1:30 PM, NHH's EDIAC committee will be hosting a hybrid fireside chat themed 'Black Faces, White Spaces' in the

Peter B. and Mary T. Smith Community Education Centre, located on the hospital's second floor.

The panel of guest speakers will include: Yasmyn Belle, Accessibility and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, The Corporation of the Town of Cobourg; Aleecia Lugossy, Housing Partnerships Coordinator, Habitat for Humanity Northumberland; Esther Okoro, Director, Global Change Management, McCain Foods; and, Kola Aina, Senior Vice President, North America Strategy & Operations, Mastercard.

Internally focused, this event will be open to members of staff, physicians, midwives, and volunteers here at NHH. These sessions are not recorded, but we will be offering a virtual option so that those who are unable to make it in person can stream the live event. Lunch will be provided for those in attendance.

Additionally, NHH will also be flying the Black History Month flag throughout the month of February on our new community flagpole.

## Exceptional care, every time, for every person

### **High patient volumes continue across hospital, patient flow being sustained**

A recent report from the Canadian Medical Association warned that the country's Emergency Departments are overburdened and working in crisis mode. Here in Ontario, some hospitals have taken steps to caution patients of longer than usual wait times and made recommendations to seek other supports as appropriate and able.

While high patient volumes continue to be experienced, NHH has not had to issue such a disclaimer at this time. In November, 2023, the latest month for which provincial numbers are available, the overall average all patients waited for first assessment by a doctor in emergency was 2.1 hours both provincially and at NHH.



<b>Time spent in Emergency Departments – November 2023</b>		
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>NHH</b>
Wait time to first assessment by doctor in Emergency, all patients	2.1 hours	2.1 hours
Length of stay in Emergency for low-urgency patients not admitted to hospital	3.2 hours (73 % of patients finished their Emergency visit within target time, 4 hours)	2.4 hours (87 % of patients finished their emergency visit within target time of 4 hours)
Length of stay in Emergency for high-urgency patients not admitted to hospital	4.7 hours (88 % of patients finished their Emergency visit within target time of 8 hours)	3.9 hours (96 % of patients finished their Emergency visit within target time of 8 hours)
Length of stay in Emergency for all patients admitted to hospital	22.4 hours (23% of patients admitted to hospital from Emergency within target time of 8 hours)	10.8 hours (40% of patients admitted to hospital from Emergency within target time of 8 hours)

Source: [Emergency Department Time Spent by Patients in Ontario – Health Quality Ontario \(HQO\) \(hqontario.ca\)](https://www.hqontario.ca/emergency-department-time-spent-by-patients-in-ontario)

Another indicator of flow (and satisfaction) within the Emergency Department is the provincial Leave Without Being Seen (LWBS) rate. The provincial average for the data last shared with our NHH clinical team is 5 % (November 2023). Of the 27 hospitals in our East Region, NHH’s Emergency Department (at a rate of 2.3 % LWBS for the month of November, 2023) had the second lowest rate of LWBS, second only to Kingston Hotel Dieu.

### **NHH invited to present PFAC and Experience Framework journey at upcoming Rural and Northern Hospital conference**

NHH will have an opportunity to share insights this month into its evolving experience program at a provincial conference geared specifically to Ontario’s rural and northern hospitals.

Invited to speak on behalf of the hospital, Jennifer Gillard, VP Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Strategic Partners will be co-presenting the talk with NHH’s PFAC chair, Bonnie McKee on day one of the two-day Rural and Northern Healthcare Conference which runs February 29<sup>th</sup> through March 1<sup>st</sup> in Toronto.

Titled “*Patient and Family Advisory Council and the Evolution of An Integrated Experience Program*,” key takeaways from Jennifer and Bonnie’s presentation will include:

- How the NHH PFAC was established and how it can be applied to other smaller community hospitals
- How the program is governed and structured to maximize effectiveness and outcomes
- How NHH is advancing its Experience evolution, and where the hospital expects to be in the future with the co-design of its first ever Experience Framework and related multi-year work plan

For registration information and other details on the conference, see the event brochure [here](#). Jennifer and Bonnie have subsequently been invited to present virtually on NHH’s PFAC and Experience Framework co-design at the February 27th meeting of the Ontario Hospital Association’s **Community of Practice for Patient Experience**, which Jennifer will also be supporting as an incoming Steering Committee member for 2024.

### **Masking requirements continue throughout clinical and patient care areas**

A reminder that masking requirements remain in place throughout NHH’s clinical and patient care areas, including Community Mental Health offices. Masking is optional in common areas and non-patient care areas (Main Street Bistro, corridors) but we remain a very mask-friendly organization and encourage all who choose to wear a mask throughout their visit to please do so as an added layer of protection for themselves and those they are visiting.

Visitors continue to have access to free masks on entry. Please remember: while treats from home are a pleasure to share with your loved one in hospital, they are not permitted in inpatient rooms at this time. No eating or drinking is permitted by visitors in patient rooms at this time due to the infection risk that this could pose.

For additional information, and latest news, please see our Visiting Guidelines on our website [here](#). Thank you to all for the continued cooperation and support.