



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NHH and OHT-N recognize National Caregiver Day with the launch of Essential Care Partner program

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Tuesday, April 1, 2025—In recognition of National Caregiver Day—observed annually on the first Tuesday in April—Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) are pleased to announce the recent launch of the Essential Care Partner (ECP) Program Pilot Project.

A joint initiative between NHH, the OHT-N—which is providing project management and coordination—and the Ontario Caregiver Organization, the Essential Care Partner (ECP) Program Pilot Project will focus on the unique needs of caregivers supporting patients in the hospital's Post Acute Specialty Services (PASS) unit (including Palliative Care and Integrated Stroke).

In time, pending evaluation of the PASS pilot, the vision is that the ECP Program will be rolled out hospital wide and to other health care and social service organizations within Northumberland County to enhance supports for caregivers throughout the region.

By formally recognizing the vital role of caregivers in patient well-being, this project aims to use new resources developed by the Ontario Caregiver Association (OCO) to improve patient outcomes, reduce caregiver burnout, and optimize hospital resources.

The new ECP Working Group includes members of the OHT-N and NHH teams, with representation from a broad mix of clinical and support services including: nursing, allied health, social work, Most Responsible Provider (in this instance, Nurse Practitioners), Ontario Health atHome, clinical information, leadership, volunteers and—most important—people with lived experience through patient and caregiver partners from both NHH's Patient Family Advisory Council (PFAC) and their counterparts within the OHT-N.

Working group members will meet monthly moving forward, with an estimated rollout of the first phase of the project in late summer/early fall.

“A key priority identified in NHH’s strategic plan is “exceptional patient care, for every person, every time,” said Susan Walsh, NHH President and CEO and co-chair of the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (with Taryn Rennicks, Executive Director, Community Health Centre of Northumberland). “The ECP project is another enabler toward NHH’s Shared Purpose of **People First** and our work to provide the best human experience for all.”

“We are grateful for this important collaborative opportunity because it shines a light on the critical role that caregivers bring to a patient’s care journey,” said Andrea Groff, OHT-N Executive Lead. “Most importantly, it connects caregivers to a network of resources, ensuring they are receiving the support needed to perform caretaking duties. We look forward to sharing updates as this important work progresses.”

“Statistics from the Ontario Caregiver Organization show that 4 million caregivers across Ontario provide an estimated 75% of care in the system,” said Suzanne Lawson, Chair, OHT-N Experience Partner Council. “Their contributions to care cannot be understated and therefore it is critical that we continue to raise visibility about the importance of their role, not only in the lives of a patient, but across the broader healthcare system.”

To learn more about the Ontario Caregiver Organization and its many resources, which include a 24/7 Helpline, webinars, e-learning and group and peer supports, visit OntarioCaregiver.ca

For more about the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland visit OHTNorthumberland.ca

For more about Northumberland Hills Hospital, visit NHH.ca

Media contacts:

Jennifer Gillard

VP, Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships
Northumberland
905-377-7757
jgillard@nhh.ca

Kate Campbell

Director, Communications and Information Technology
Northumberland County
905-372-3329 ext. 2335
campbellk@northumberlandcounty.ca

-END-