



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Information Booth at NHH in Recognition of World Kidney Day

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Tuesday, March 3, 2020 — When the results of a blood test in 2012 were delivered, Bob McKenzie learned his kidneys were not functioning properly and by 2015, he required dialysis. Now a kidney transplant recipient and Transplant Ambassador with the Ontario Renal Network, the former dialysis patient of Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is keen to give back to the network that supported him. Mr. McKenzie will be in attendance at NHH from 10:00a.m. to 2:00p.m. on March 12, 2020 – World Kidney Day – 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.

“I was a dialysis patient at NHH for 3 years,” said Mr. McKenzie. “I was fortunate to be eligible for transplant, to be matched with a donor and have success with the surgery. It’s truly an honour to be part of the same hospital’s Transplant Ambassador program today, and on this World Kidney Day. I look forward to sharing my story with others and, perhaps, helping other families with their own chronic kidney disease journey.”

Mr. McKenzie will have an information booth set up beside the Main Street Bistro of NHH and will be proudly sporting his bright green Transplant Ambassador Program (TAP) vest. He’ll be accompanied by Debbie Bennett, a living kidney donor and fellow TAP Ambassador.

When Debbie Bennett’s son’s kidneys started to fail, she was quick to offer to donate one of her own. After undergoing testing and determining the two were compatible and Bennett was a viable kidney donor, Debbie Bennett and her son underwent donor and recipient surgeries in 2013 and today both are doing well.

TAP is a pilot program launched in June 2017 to help build awareness of, and reduce barriers to living kidney transplantation. It is a grass-roots, patient-led initiative supported by the CanSOLVE-CKD Network, in partnership with the Ontario Renal Network and Trillium Gift of Life Network. The program’s goal is to connect current kidney disease patients and their family members with those who have donated a kidney or are living with a transplant, and ambassadors are volunteers who are either kidney donors or recipients.

TAP volunteers are currently onsite in 13 hospitals across Ontario, including the NHH’s dialysis unit and the clinic, a 12-station satellite service of the regional dialysis program based at Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC). In addition to Mr. McKenzie and Debbie Bennett, Krista Morgan, a Renal Nurse Navigator at PRHC will be onsite at NHH with a blood pressure monitoring table during the World Kidney Day event.

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 this year’s campaign is *Kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere – from Prevention to Detection and Equitable Access to Care*.

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, and for more information on TAP or to connect with a Transplant Ambassador, visit 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

Media contact: Jennifer Gillard, Senior Director, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

- END -