



PUBLIC NOTICE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

C. difficile outbreak conditions lifted at NHH

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, May 22nd, 2012 – An outbreak of *clostridium difficile* (C. difficile) identified on Northumberland Hills Hospital's Restorative Care Unit on April 20th, 2012, has been lifted.

At a meeting held early today between NHH infection prevention and control practitioners and representatives from the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, it was confirmed that patient-to-patient transmission had been successfully stopped.

Control measures initiated when the outbreak was identified last month included temporary closure of the 16-bed Restorative Care unit to new admissions; enhanced cleaning of the unit and any equipment shared between patient rooms; and proactive use of contact precautions pending lab confirmation of any patient cases suspected to be C. difficile positive.

"The steps taken by our NHH team, in consultation with provincial infection control experts and infection prevention leads at the local Health Unit, were comprehensive. We are very pleased that no new cases emerged following identification of this outbreak on April 20th and that the patients who were affected have recovered. In total, the number of affected patients on the unit never rose above 5 and we can credit effective teamwork and the cooperation of patients and visitors with that result," said Myonne Allan, NHH Director of Laboratory Services and Infection Control.

"The Health Unit has worked closely with NHH during this outbreak and applauds the work the staff did in implementing infection control measures to help end the outbreak," said Linda McCarey, Acting Director of Communicable Disease Control for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit.

C. difficile is a bacteria found in the human bowel. It can cause diarrhea and is one of the most common infections in hospitals, health-care facilities and in the broader community. Individuals most at risk include those who have taken antibiotics in the past two months, are older than 65 years of age, and have underlying illnesses and multiple or prolonged hospital stays.

While the outbreak has been lifted at NHH, C. difficile bacteria remain present in the health-care system and in the community. NHH reminds all visitors to be diligent in practicing appropriate hand hygiene and infection prevention and control practices when

visiting the hospital at any time. Frequent hand washing, particularly before and after patient contact, is mandatory and vital to reducing health care-associated infections.

For further information on C. difficile disease, please see NHH's April 20th, 2012 Public Notice on the subject. For a printable copy of NHH's *Visitor Tips for Minimizing the Spread of Infection*, please see nhh.ca.

For more information please contact Jennifer Gillard at 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, and obstetrical care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care, rehabilitation and palliative care. 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.