



NHH
Northumberland
Hills Hospital

Cobourg Police Service and Northumberland Hills Hospital Expand Mental Health Support

COBOURG (May 28, 2025) – The Cobourg Police Service (CPS) and Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) are pleased to announce the enhancement of the Mental Health Engagement and Response Team (M-HEART) services. Thanks to generous funding from the Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) Enhancement Grant, a second M-HEART has been deployed for afternoon and evening coverage.

Since its inception in 2017, the M-HEART partnership has provided urgent mobile support to individuals and families in Northumberland County who are experiencing a mental health crisis. The expansion of this service will address growing community needs and ensure that mental health support is available outside of regular hours. A second M-HEART team is deployed during afternoons and evenings to offer vital assistance during the times when it is most needed.

“As health care providers, it’s critical for us to continue finding innovative ways to make care accessible for everyone, not only in our community, but surrounding catchment areas,” said NHH President and CEO Susan Walsh. “The expansion of M-HEART services will help us break down barriers to care and deliver support to those in need during a crisis situation.”

“M-HEART has already been a critical service in Cobourg and surrounding communities,” added Kate Zimmerman, Vice President, Integrated Care and Chief Nursing Executive. “By expanding this service, we are making mental health care more accessible and ensuring residents receive the support they need in their time of crisis.”

The M-HEART team improves police interactions by fostering an integrated and proactive approach to mental health crises. This approach focuses on engagement, risk reduction, and connecting individuals with services right when they need it. The team is comprised of one officer from CPS and one mental health clinician from NHH Community Mental Health Services. Together, they engage directly with individuals experiencing mental health issues or substance use concerns.

This mobile outreach provides immediate intervention, helping to avoid escalation or involvement with the justice system. In addition, M-HEART works closely with partner organizations to provide comprehensive assessment, intervention, and referrals. This collaboration reduces the strain on emergency services and helps individuals navigate available resources.

By deploying a second team in the afternoon and evening hours, M-HEART will be able to offer continuous support throughout the day and into the evening, ensuring that help is available when it’s most needed.

“M-HEART is a unique and essential service that strengthens the mental health support network in Northumberland,” said Chief Paul VandeGraaf, Cobourg Police Service. “This expansion is a direct response to the increasing demand for mental health services, and it ensures that no one in our community falls through the cracks.”

The M-HEART program exemplifies the collaborative spirit that has been instrumental in improving mental health support in Northumberland County. This expansion will help better address community wellness and safety



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priorities, offering immediate support to individuals in crisis and mitigating barriers such as transportation and system navigation.

This partnership reaffirms the commitment of CPS and NHH to enhancing the mental health and safety of residents, helping reduce crisis situations, and improving overall community well-being.

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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, cancer and supportive care, dialysis and 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 67,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than 850 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp) and LinkedIn [Northumberland Hills Hospital](https://www.linkedin.com/company/northumberland-hills-hospital).

About Cobourg Police Service - The Cobourg Police Service is a trusted community partner committed to quality policing that protects the safety, security and in turn, enhances the quality of life in the Town of Cobourg. The service is directed by Chief Paul VandeGraaf, supported by a robust team of senior administrators, uniformed and civilian members. As its most valuable resource, the Cobourg Police Service takes pride in its members who each day strive to keep our community a safe place to live, work and play. A Police Service Board, made up of five local members, provides civilian governance and policy direction. The Board operates under legislation and directives outlined by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. The Board ensures Cobourg Police has met all the Police Adequacy Standards and is a professional and complete police service meeting the needs of the community. For more information, visit cobourgpolicesservice.com and follow us on social media [@cobourgpolic](https://www.facebook.com/cobourgpolic).