



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

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“If you build it, they will come” - Northumberland Hills Hospital secures coveted expertise to support upcoming MRI service

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Tuesday, July 17, 2007 – Progress continues on-schedule for the fall launch of the new Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) service at Northumberland Hills Hospital with two important wins on the recruiting front.

In December 2006, the hospital received approval and additional operating funding from the Ministry of Health to establish the service.

The provincial approval was only the first step on a long list of “to do” items necessary to make the dream a reality. December’s government announcement set in motion a range of actions, and one of the most challenging – given the current market for health care expertise – was the search for specially trained individuals to run the service and assist in the interpretation of the scans.

“June brought success on two important fronts,” announced Dr. Frank Marrocco, Chief of Radiology, Northumberland Hills Hospital. “We have successfully recruited two key people for our new MRI service in west Northumberland: a Medical Radiation Charge Technologist and a Radiologist who is an expert in MR.”

Pamela Knott, NHH’s new MRI Charge Technologist, arrived at the hospital on Monday, June 25. Previously a Senior Technologist at Peterborough Regional Health Centre, and the Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor, Ms. Knott’s responsibilities at NHH will benefit from that direct MRI program experience, and include the education of staff and the establishment of hospital protocols.

The director of the new service will be Dr. Julian C. Chen. An adjunct staff member in the Department of Medical Imaging at the University of Toronto, Dr. Chen’s most recent clinical appointment was a nine-year term as Director of MRI in the Department of Radiology at the Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor.

Highly regarded in his field, with a long list of publications in professional, peer-reviewed journals to his credit, Dr. Chen is considered a leading expert on MRI technology. Dr. Chen served as an Expert Panel Member for Cancer Care Ontario's Diagnostic Imaging Recommendation Group in 2005-2006. In the same period he also chaired the Subcommittee on Appropriateness and Utilization, CT and MR Expert Panel, for Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Wait Time Initiative.

Said Dr. Marrocco: "Dr. Chen is exactly the candidate we had in mind when we set out on our rather unconventional recruitment process for a Radiologist. The opportunity to set up and lead an MRI service is a unique one, and to ensure we made it known to every qualified radiologist in the country, we actually went through the professional directories, and mailed a letter to each one. We had a strong level of interest, and Dr. Chen was the successful candidate. I am very excited about the opportunity to work with him and with our new MRI Charge Technologist, Pamela Knott, on this service. Our hospital is very fortunate to be in a position to add these two highly trained individuals to our team."

Dr. Chen's start date is still being finalized, but it is expected that he will arrive at NHH early this fall.

On other fronts, progress is also moving forward on the physical preparations for the MRI service. Hospital staff and external recycling contractors have purged old films from the Film Library in the Diagnostic Imaging Department to make way for the new equipment.

Hospitals are required by law to retain all film records for five years. For children, the retention requirements are even longer. NHH is now producing only digital images. This means that less and less storage is required and the 1000-square-feet required for the MRI service can be gained—an arrangement planned for since the construction of the hospital in 2003. None of the old films will go to landfill. Paper components are being shredded and recycled, silver is being reclaimed from the films and the plastic film base will also be shredded and recycled.

The contractor charged with preparing the space has begun the renovations. Delivery of the equipment is expected to take place in October with the service officially opening this fall. Further details will be released later this summer.

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

About Northumberland Hills Hospital - The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto. The 137-bed hospital delivers a broad range of services, including medical/surgical care, complex/long term care, rehabilitation, palliative care, obstetrical care and intensive care. NHH also sponsors a Community Mental Health Centre and an Assertive Community Treatment Team. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland is comprised of the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs over 500 people and is an active member of the Central East LHIN. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca.