



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

inspiring strength, dignity and compassion

News Release – For Immediate Release

State-of-the-art patient tracking system to go live in NHH Emergency Department

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, October 18, 2007 – On Tuesday, October 23, the Emergency Department at Northumberland Hills Hospital will join a select number of hospitals in the province with an electronic patient tracking system.

Today, nurses and physicians at NHH use a large, wall-mounted whiteboard to list the name and status of patients receiving treatment in the ED. With the introduction of the new Emergency Department Management System (EDM) next week, all of what was once handled on paper or on the whiteboard will now be tracked in a secure, electronic environment. The change, from the patient's perspective, will translate into: an improved triage process; faster access to test results; improved confidentiality; and increased access to information about one's own treatment status or that of a loved one.

Fourteen computer terminals stationed throughout the main-floor ED will form the backbone of NHH's EDM system when it goes live next week. The Fast Track service—open Mondays through Fridays from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM for those with more minor problems such as colds, flu, minor cuts, rashes—will also be connected.

With electronic links into other clinical areas relied upon heavily in the ED, such as Diagnostic Imaging (where patients are sent for X-rays, CT scans or—as of early November—MRs) and the Lab, the new system will bring simultaneous, at-a-glance information to all the clinicians (physicians, nurses and technologists) involved in a patient's care.

On arrival at the ED, patients will present their symptoms to the triage nurse on duty who will, from October 23, document these in the computer rather than a manual chart. For those with the new photo health card, the information stored in the card's magnetic strip (name, date of birth, etc.) will be quickly captured with a swipe through a card reader linked into the EDM computer. For those with an original red and white health card, the information will be typed in.

From triage, the personnel at the registration desk will continue the documentation of personal information on the same integrated system and, once inside the ED, tests, results and information pertinent to the patient's care go in as well.

An important step forward in the Ontario's journey toward electronic health records, NHH's Emergency Department Management System (EDM) is being launched in conjunction with an identical system at Peterborough Regional Health Centre. According to Mary-Anne Shill, NHH's Vice-President of Patient Services, EDM technology is revolutionizing health care delivery while providing many benefits to both patients and health care providers.

"For patients visiting our ER, there are a host of tangible benefits from a simplified triage process to increased access to information about their own treatment status or that of a loved one. From the perspective of health care providers, the more information we have about a patient the better. In an emergency, when a test result is required before life-saving treatment can be started, everything we can do to speed up the exchange of information improves the patient's outcome, and that's what this is all about." says Shill.

For more information, or to arrange an interview, 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.