



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

inspiring strength, dignity and compassion

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Fracture Fighters”: New inpatient rehabilitation program puts NHH on leading edge in fight against osteoporosis

Presentation on prevention and management, December 5, hospital

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, November, 26, 2007 – Participation in the “Fracture Fighters” program that is rolling out across the province has put Northumberland Hills Hospital on the leading edge in the fight against osteoporosis.

Fracture Fighters is a program developed for the inpatient rehabilitation component of the Ontario Osteoporosis Strategy. The goal is to integrate osteoporosis assessment and management into existing rehabilitation services provided to patients post-fracture to prevent future fractures and to slow down the progress of a disease currently diagnosed in 1.4 million Canadians.

Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue. More common to women than men (one in four women over the age of 50 has osteoporosis versus one in eight men), the condition leads to increased bone fragility and risk of fracture, particularly of the hip, spine and wrist. Often referred to as “the silent thief,” because bone loss occurs without symptoms, osteoporosis is sometimes confused with osteoarthritis. Osteoporosis is a bone disease; osteoarthritis is a disease of the joints and surrounding tissue.

“Education and prevention among both our staff and the general public is key to battling this progressively debilitating disease. After getting the program off the ground in Inpatient Rehabilitation, we hope to integrate it throughout the rest of the hospital in due course,” says Janet Burn, Program Director for Palliative, Rehabilitation and Complex Care.

The cost of treating osteoporosis and the fractures it can cause is estimated at \$1.9 billion each year in Canada. The Ontario Osteoporosis Strategy has five distinct components:

- Helping prevent the onset of osteoporosis by educating seniors and school children about bone health
- Improving early diagnosis by ensuring the appropriate use of bone density testing
- Integrating services to provide enhanced treatment, including creation of a province-wide fracture clinic program to improve diagnosis and prevention of future fractures
- Tools to help practitioners use clinical practice guidelines
- More research to increase knowledge about osteoporosis

The program is the culmination of almost nine years of hard work by health care and research professionals of the Osteoporosis Strategy to develop specific, achievable recommendations to help prevent and treat osteoporosis.

Public presentation on osteoporosis, December 5, NHH

As part of the new program, Northumberland Hills Hospital will host a 45-minute public presentation on osteoporosis by Heather Easton, the Regional Manager of the Osteoporosis Strategy, on Wednesday, December 5 at 2 PM in room 2F28. All those interested in learning more about the disease and the steps they can take to prevent and treat osteoporosis are encouraged to attend.

“NHH is committed to doing everything it can to enhance patient-focused care. We are delighted to be a part of this important program which raises awareness among staff and the general public on how to effectively recognize, treat and prevent osteoporosis,” says Mary Anne Shill, Vice President of Patient Services.

For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact Jennifer Gillard at 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca. For details about osteoporosis, go to the Osteoporosis Canada Web site at www.osteoporosis.ca. Information on the Fracture Fighters program can be obtained at www.fracturefighters.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.