



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

inspiring strength, dignity and compassion

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hospital earns five-year Ontario Laboratory Accreditation

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, February 20, 2008 – The Northumberland Hills Hospital Laboratory learned this week that it has earned a coveted five-year accreditation from the Ontario Laboratory Accreditation (OLA).

Mandated by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, accreditation is required for all licensed Ontario medical laboratories. Accreditation is awarded to the successful laboratories for two- or five-year periods following a peer review assessment process through which an authoritative body ensures that the laboratory meets explicit quality management criteria.

Myonne Allan, Director of Laboratory Services and Infection Control at Northumberland Hills Hospital, said Ontario Laboratory Accreditation is a lengthy and stringent process. Though NHH received hospital-wide accreditation in 2007, specific reviews of other areas serve to further enhance quality control, including this Laboratory review.

“There were 423 mandatory requirements that the NHH Laboratory had to meet. NHH met 90% of the requirements immediately following our assessment, with three major non-conformances and 44 minor non-conformances. We were permitted 90 days to comply with the three major non-conformances. This was successfully completed by the end of December of 2007. A written action plan was also required to address how we intended to comply with the 44 minor non-conformances. This plan was also submitted to OLA in December of 2007 and we will complete these actions within the next year,” said Allan.

The provincial accreditation process for laboratories includes regular peer assessment visits (at minimum every five years) and self-assessments that occur between visits—a requirement that marries well with NHH’s philosophy of continuous process improvement.

Depending on the size and scope of the laboratory, the actual accreditation assessment visit is one to four days in length. Accreditation team members assess the laboratory according to pre-assigned tasks and each member completes the appropriate assessment tools (checklists) to determine conformance to program requirements. At the conclusion of the visit, the team leader facilitates a summation meeting to review the findings and conclusions with administration, laboratory management and additional laboratory staff. This verbal report outlines commendations and major/minor non-conformances.

Peer visits at NHH occurred on September 25 and 26 of 2007.

“At NHH, our focus is on quality management to reduce errors. As this review demonstrates, we have created a system in which it is difficult to do the wrong thing and easier to do the right thing. If mistakes occur, the root cause is determined and the process is re-defined,” said Joan Ross, President and CEO.

Accreditation status is assessed following each peer accreditation assessment visit. Three options in terms of accreditation may result:

1. A five-year accreditation certificate is issued
2. A two-year accreditation certificate is issued
3. Intent to withdraw accreditation is declared

“A five-year accreditation rating does not come easily. We are extremely proud of our team in the NHH Laboratory for their determination, extraordinary effort and hard work. Special thanks go to Myonne Allan, Lab Director, and Dr. Allison Collins, our Medical Director of Laboratory Services,” said Ross.

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

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto. The 137-bed acute care hospital delivers a broad range of core 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.