



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

inspiring strength, dignity and compassion

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Town of Cobourg bus service returns to the front door at NHH

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, November 12, 2008 – Recent efforts to remove vehicle congestion in and around the front round-about at the hospital are proving successful. The Town of Cobourg bus service returned to the front door of the hospital late last week. In the wake of increasing traffic, and an accident earlier this year, the Town had been forced to move its stop to the corner of DePalma and Chris Garrett Way, a considerable walk from the front entrance and away from the shelter of the hospital.

“We’re very pleased with the level of understanding shown by the community in our need to keep the round-about clear,” said Joan Ross, President and CEO. “Most people appreciate that the circle is not a parking lot. We need to keep it clear for the bus to get through on schedule. Just as important, there is a risk to those inside the building if the fire route is not kept clear. We’re particularly pleased at the Town’s quick return of the bus service. With winter approaching, those who depend on this service will find it more user-friendly.”

Intended for quick drop-offs and pick-ups, the only spaces in which a car should be parked in the round-about are in the physicians’ area to the north (for physicians called in to assist in the delivery of a baby) and in one of the four spots reserved for Community Care drivers. Community Care drivers have been given laminated cards that they must post clearly in their vehicles if they need to leave their cars briefly to assist the person they’re bringing to or from the hospital. If they need to remain at the hospital for any time, the Community Care drivers are expected to move their vehicles to the main lot. The balance of space in the round-about must be kept vehicle free, with cars stopping only briefly to drop off or pick up passengers.

To avoid the cost of a full-time enforcement officer—a solution used in many hospitals within the province to maintain flow at or near key entrances—several NHH staff members have been authorized and trained by the Town of Cobourg to ticket offenders. Fines range from \$25 for a car found parking in the no parking spaces at the main door, to \$50 for parking in a fire route and a very significant \$300 fine for anyone found parking without the appropriate permit in a parking space that is designated for someone with a mobility impairment.

“We have had to issue a few tickets,” said Joan Ross, “but the number is diminishing as people get the message that this is a no-parking zone. Our message is: the convenience of a few cannot overrule the safety of the majority.”

The renewed enforcement of the parking rules in the round-about is the latest in a series of parking enhancements at the hospital. Approved by the NHH Board of Directors is the final phase of the NHH parking improvement plan. This will include the installation of new parking mechanisms to permit the purchase—in the main lot—of short-term parking (the current mechanism allows a flat, daily fee only). The change will also bring to all lots at the hospital the option of payment by credit card, and the generation of a receipt. The new parking mechanism will not accept tokens, and visitors will be able to pay for their parking prior to exiting the hospital.

Completion of the final phase of the NHH parking enhancement is expected early in the new year.

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 acute care hospital delivers a broad range of services, including emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, complex/long-term care, rehabilitation, palliative care and obstetrical care. A variety of ambulatory care clinics are also offered at NHH. In addition to these, 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 comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs close to 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East LHIN. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca.