



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS  
**HOSPITAL**

Senior Management  
Report to the Board  
December 2018

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**Quality and Safety**

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**Internal flu vaccination rates increasing**

Launched October 17<sup>th</sup>, NHH's annual influenza vaccination campaign for staff and physicians is progressing well, with more than 53% of staff now vaccinated and mobile clinics still in progress throughout the hospital. Physician rates are not yet available, but are also believed to be higher than this time last year.

NHH has worked closely with the local Public Health Unit to make the vaccine available to all staff/physicians while also encouraging the same within the community in order to achieve the necessary group immunity required to slow the spread of influenza. Results of this year's efforts are scheduled for reporting to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in mid-December.

The annual influenza vaccination is a key step in protecting ourselves, our loved ones and the patients we care for. NHH highlighted the importance of the influenza vaccine and other infection prevention best practices in the November edition of its community newsletter, *In Touch*. See an excerpt from that newsletter, *Seven steps for a healthy holiday season*, below.

**Seven steps for a healthy holiday season**

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit has confirmed the arrival of the first local influenza case in the region. As we head into the busy holiday season, Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is sharing its annual reminder to plan ahead, where possible, to help keep limited local health care services accessible for those who need them the most.

By planning ahead, and making use of alternative resources for non-emergency situations, we can minimize the seasonal strain on our local Emergency Department (ED), which typically sees patient volumes increase further between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve with the holiday closure of many primary care offices.

Below are seven steps we can all take in the next few weeks to help ensure a healthy holiday season. NHH extends best wishes to all for a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

**1) Influenza vaccination – Get your flu shot, not the flu**

Influenza typically begins to circulate in mid- to late-November, and the local Health Unit is confirming that we are seeing the same pattern in 2018. Don't let the flu take the fun out of your holiday celebrations. Recommended for those six months of age and older, you can protect yourself, your family and your community with the influenza vaccination. Available now from family physician offices, community health centres, walk-in clinics and pharmacies, the flu vaccination is your best line of defense against a potentially dangerous virus. For a full list of pharmacies offering flu vaccination clinics in the area, as well as a useful question and answer sheet on the vaccine, see the [local Health Unit's website](#).

## **2) Wash your hands – often!**

Germs live on surfaces. Reduce your risk of picking up unwanted germs by washing your hands, often, especially when you are out in public. Regular, proper hand hygiene is the single most effective step you can take to stop the spread of seasonal viruses.

## **3) Eat well, and get a good balance of rest and exercise**

We can help to keep our immune systems strong by powering up with a healthy diet, plenty of rest and regular exercise. Resources on healthy eating, including links to Canada's food guides, will be found on the [local Health Unit's website](#).

## **4) Sneeze and cough into your sleeve (not your hands)**

Minimize the risk of spreading germs to the surfaces you touch by sneezing and coughing into your sleeve.

## **5) Stay home from work, school and public events if you are sick**

Sometimes, the best medicine is rest and, when you're sick, staying home to get some rest is another good way of minimizing the spread of the germs you may be carrying. Influenza spreads from person to person, through a handshake or a cough, and can be unknowingly transmitted to others, particularly those who may be more vulnerable, such as older adults, very young children and those whose immune systems have been compromised by another illness.

## **6) Make note of your doctor or nurse practitioner's holiday hours and—where possible—plan ahead**

Local primary care offices will have special hours of operation over the holiday. Now is the time to check to see when your doctor or nurse practitioner will be available and to confirm your family's prescriptions are up-to-date, in advance of any closure, so you can minimize non-urgent trips to the ED.

## **7) Consider Emergency Department alternatives**

NHH's Emergency Department is always ready when you need it, but the team does advise that you consider area primary care offices or community clinics for non-emergency health concerns. Many local family physicians now operate after-hour clinics, accessible to their patients only. Check to see if your family physician has an after-hour service in place. If your situation is non-urgent, and your family physician isn't available, you can also:

- Get free telephone access to a Registered Nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the **Telehealth Ontario** service at 1-866-797-0000 (TTY 1-866-797-0007).
- Visit the **Port Hope Walk-In Clinic** at 99 Toronto Road, Port Hope (2<sup>nd</sup> floor). The Clinic (905-885-0611) will be open every day over the holidays, including December 24<sup>th</sup>, from 10AM to 4PM on weekends, and 11AM to 5PM on weekdays (at the discretion of the physician working each day) with the exception of December 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>, when the clinic will be closed.
- Visit the **Central East Local Health Integration Network's HealthLine website** at <http://www.centraleasthealthline.ca/> for a detailed listing of health and community services across our region.

## **ALC pressures continue to negatively impact access to acute care at NHH**

Alternate Level of Care (ALC) pressures continue to negatively impact NHH's ability to efficiently flow patients into and through the hospital. Though the acute phase of their condition has passed, ALC patients must remain in the hospital—to no fault of their own—when they cannot safely go home and when no appropriate alternative is available.

In the latest ALC data available (for October 2018), our region—the Central East LHIN—had the third highest ALC rate among the province's 14 LHINs, at 21.3%, down from a high (in August 2017) of 25%. Within the LHIN, NHH was the sixth highest in terms of hospitals' ALC rate, at 20.5%, with that rate rising higher in recent weeks.

While progress has been made in the past year, opportunities remain, particularly for patients with significant responsive behaviours, as capacity within facilities capable of caring for these individuals is scarce.

Discussions with the Ministry of Health, our LHIN, and the Ontario Hospital Association on the issue of ALC continue to be encouraging. As shared in the October Report, the government has committed to ensuring additional system capacity.

While longer-term community solutions are developed, NHH is fortunate in that we have some capacity within our facility to accommodate the addition of beds. As communicated to the LHIN, what is required is the operating funding to proactively initiate and sustain these beds without going into a deficit position that would erode the dollar savings gained through implementation of our Hospital Improvement Plan initiatives.

Further updates will continue to be shared as more information on ALC solutions becomes available.

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## Great Place to Work and Volunteer

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### **Exceptional community, exceptional Foundation – NHH Foundation Gala results**

The results of the 2018 Gala are in and we are overwhelmed. Over \$270,000 was raised--\$20,000 more than the fundraising total achieved in 2017. What a community, what a Foundation. From everyone here on the NHH team, thank you. For details, please see the Gala magazine, distributed with the December 6<sup>th</sup> edition of Northumberland News.

### **Children's Christmas Party at NHH**

This past weekend Santa's most hardworking helper, staff member Doris Chin Brunton, organized yet another amazing afternoon of fun for the children and grandchildren of NHH staff in the NHH Education Centre.

Doris is quick to point to the volunteers and staff who support her with this event, but it would not happen without her personal commitment, dedication and hard work.

Please join the Senior Team in extending a huge thank you to Doris for this wonderful gift to the children again this year. And thanks too to all those who donated their time and talents, including area students. 194 children registered this year... the biggest party yet!

### **Staff breakfast and holiday dinner/dance provide a much-needed break for busy teams**

NHH hosted its annual Staff Breakfast in the Main Street Bistro today (December 6<sup>th</sup>). With more than 250 served, the breakfast is prepared and served to staff by members of the leadership team and medical staff, with the Medical Staff Association generously supporting costs. A long standing tradition at the hospital, the very popular event offers a chance for teams to sit down together and enjoy a meal.

### **Values Ambassadors organizing Holiday Dinner/Dance**

A newer tradition, but one that has caught on very quickly, is the Holiday Dinner/Dance for all staff, physicians and volunteers. Attended by over 200 last year, the 2019 event—organized once again by the hospital's Values Ambassadors—is tracking for an even bigger crowd. With an excellent meal provided by the Lions Club of Cobourg, dancing and prizes, the event is another chance for members of the care teams to come together with the volunteers who support us so generously throughout the year to celebrate the season, and NHH.

### **NHH Auxiliary success, and stamina!**

Members of the Senior Management Team were pleased to share in the NHH Auxiliary celebrations in the past month marking both the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Auxiliary, and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their very successful thrift shop, Petticoat Lane, located at 25 Munroe Street in Cobourg.

Almost \$2.5 million has been raised since 1968 with over \$1.2 million being donated to the Northumberland Hills Hospital since its opening in 2003.

Details will be shared directly from the Auxiliary. Please join us in thanking each and every member of this outstanding team of volunteers for their dedication and support of NHH through the years.

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## Collaborative Community Partnerships

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### **Northumberland PACE – 2018/19 season of health and wellness talks continue, with new video component expanding accessibility**

Free, public education sessions on a broad range of health and wellness topics, the Northumberland PACE talks are attracting a growing number of both regular and new attendees. Launched three years ago by Dr. Mukesh Bhargava, NHH is pleased to support the 2018/19 season, together with a team of partners. The Northumberland Family Health Team, the Community Health Centres of Northumberland, internal medicine specialists IMCare and local patients and caregivers are all represented on the 2018/19 planning table, as is the Interactive Media Development - Film and Television Production program at Loyalist College, which has provided a team of students to support audio and visual recording and distribution.

Lasting an hour in length, each PACE talk consists of a 30-minute talk, a 20-minute question-and-answer period with the speaker and a 10-minute moderator summary. PACE talks start at 5:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month, from September through June, and rotate between Cobourg (at NHH, 1000 DePalma Drive) and Port Hope (at the Community Health Centres of Northumberland, 99 Toronto Road).

Last month's talk took place on November 21<sup>st</sup> with speaker **Dr. Peter Barnett**, Department Chief of the Northumberland Hills Hospital Emergency Department. Dr. Barnett's topic—"How to Prepare for your trip to the Emergency Department"—was appropriate for any time of the year, but it was especially relevant as we head into the busy flu and holiday season. Over 50 attended, and the video has been uploaded at [www.pacetalks.com](http://www.pacetalks.com)

All PACE talks are free, but pre-registration is required to manage room capacity. Registration for the December 19<sup>th</sup> session is now open at [www.pacetalks.com](http://www.pacetalks.com). Join Dr. Francesco Mule for a conversation about chronic pain and the symptom cycle.

Date	Topic	Speaker	Location
December 19, 2018	<b>Chronic Pain and the Symptom Cycle</b>	Dr. Francesco Mule	CHCN
January 16, 2019	<b>Science of Happiness</b>	Dr. Mukesh Bhargava	NHH
February 20, 2019	<b>Ancient Wisdom with Today's Food</b>	Dr. Deepa Bhargava	CHCN
March 20, 2019	<b>The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Finding Quality Health Information Online</b>	Amanda Ross-White	NHH
April 17, 2019	<b>Science of Mindfulness</b>	Dr. Jackie Gardner-Nix	CHCN
May 22, 2019	<b>Caring for your Skin</b>	Dr. Anuja Sharma	NHH

## **The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario inviting public input on new strategic plan**

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) is inviting the public, patients, caregivers and health care stakeholders to complete a 10-minute survey to help guide important decisions about what the CPSO should focus on in the coming years.

The CPSO is currently developing a new strategic plan that will set a direction for the future and lay out their core priorities and activities. Through this survey, you can provide your opinions on the CPSO and its role in health care, what it has been doing well and what needs to be improved in the future.

The deadline to complete the survey is **December 7**. All results are confidential and anonymous. Find the link online at: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CPSO\\_StrategicPlanning\\_PublicandOrganizations](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CPSO_StrategicPlanning_PublicandOrganizations)

## **Central East LHIN – Change in Interim Leadership**

The Central East LHIN Board of Directors announced on November 23<sup>rd</sup> that Stewart Sutley, previously the LHIN's Vice President, Health System Strategy Integration Planning and Performance, would assume the role of Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the Central East LHIN as Dr. Barry Guppy's contract comes to an end and a process gets underway to recruit a permanent CEO.

Dr. Guppy had served as Interim CEO for the Central East LHIN beginning June 1, 2018. He will return to his previous professional life, with Mr. Sutley assuming the Interim CEO position effective December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

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## **Operational Excellence**

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### **\$1M bequest to Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation funds new fluoroscopy unit**

The new Canon Ultimax-1 fluoroscopy unit and accompanying TIMS Medical digital recording system has arrived and is already in use serving patients at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH). This \$1 million project was fully funded thanks to a generous, anonymous bequest to the NHH Foundation.

Visitors to NHH's 15th Anniversary Open House in October were among the first to be treated to a "behind the scenes" look at this impressive new addition, which produces helpful and painless images to support the diagnosis or treatment of an illness.

NHH's Diagnostic Imaging (DI) Department continues to stand out as one of Canada's most technologically advanced for a community hospital of this size. Ongoing financial support to the NHH Foundation from the community has made this all possible. In 2008 a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) suite was established, and the hospital's Computed Tomography (CT) scanner was replaced for the first time--two projects which, alone, cost \$4.2 million and were funded by community support.

The fluoroscopy unit and TIMS Medical system represent the DI Department's newest addition. "This new system makes it possible to perform multidirectional x-ray imaging and plays a critical role for the pain management of our patients with spinal and joint discomfort," said Ian Moffat, NHH's Director of Diagnostic Imaging and Laboratory Services, in a joint announcement from NHH and the NHH Foundation. "Fluoroscopy allows for an area of the body to be filmed, and studied, in motion, rather than as a still, snapshot image. Think of it as a video, versus a photograph, and you can begin to get a sense of how powerful it can be from a diagnostic perspective!"

"Along with pain management, the new fluoroscopy unit and TIMS system has greatly improved our accuracy for swallow assessments. The TIMS unit is a digital recording device that captures images that helps to assess the patient's swallowing mechanism. This leads to better therapy to get our patients from the feeding tube to the dinner table faster," said Katie Beitle, Speech Language Pathologist at Northumberland Hills Hospital. "With this donation, we'll see a significant improvement in the quality of life for patients in our community."

For more on the fluoroscopy unit, and the bequest process, please see the related news release at [www.nhh.ca](http://www.nhh.ca) or [www.nhhfoundation.ca](http://www.nhhfoundation.ca)