

Frequently Asked Questions about the Citizens' Advisory Panel:

A handout for attendees of the November 14, 2009 – Public Roundtable Meeting, Port Hope High School

1. What is the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) Citizens' Advisory Panel?

The Citizens' Advisory Panel (CAP) is a group of representatives from across west Northumberland who were randomly selected through a civic lottery process. The panelists are meeting for five Saturdays, from October to December 2009, to advise NHH's Board of Directors regarding the services the Hospital is able to deliver using the funds available. The CAP is part of the Hospital's *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* collaborative budget strategy launched in December 2008.

2. Who is overseeing the CAP?

A collaborative of four parties is supporting and overseeing NHH's first Citizens' Advisory Panel, specifically:

- the Hospital Board providing governance oversight;
- external consultants from MASS LBP with expertise in public engagement;
- researchers from Queen's School of Business with expertise in resource allocation decision making and program evaluation; and
- the Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation, as funding partner.

3. What is the financial situation at NHH?

Despite NHH's best efforts, and the \$1.4 million in efficiencies identified as a result of the *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* collaborative budget strategy, the Hospital is forecasting an operating deficit of approximately \$1.8 million for 2010/11 and \$2.8 million for 2011/12. Operating costs continue to rise, the demand for the Hospital's services continues to grow, and revenues are not keeping pace with inflation. By the end of this fiscal year, NHH will have run three consecutive years of operating deficits in order to maintain the level of services our community has come to expect and value. This is not sustainable.

4. Can we not ask the provincial government for more funding?

NHH continues to work with the Central East LHIN and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to maximize funding, but there are many competing priorities for a provincial government facing a very significant shortfall (approximately \$25 billion) of its own. Funding levels for 2010/11 and 2011/12 are not yet available to Ontario hospitals, and we have been advised to plan for scenarios of 0%, 1% and 2% increases. Despite the financial challenges facing health care today, the Ministry of Health has been very clear in its directive to hospitals: there will be no bailouts. In the words of former Health Minister David Caplan, published in a Toronto Star article earlier this year: "We want hospitals to fund their operation with the existing resources and we do not want them to run a deficit." To do so, choices are necessary. The best outcome can be achieved by having a two-way dialogue with the community served. NHH is engaging the community, through the CAP.

5. How were the CAP members chosen?

Through a process known as a civic lottery, an invitation to serve on the panel was sent to 5,000 randomly selected households across west Northumberland in September. From the responses of these households, a draw (conducted by MASS LBP) determined the panelists, balanced for age, location, gender, and recent experiences with the Hospital. The panelists were not required to be experts in health care – they are residents committed to working alongside the Hospital to provide advice on NHH's future. NHH Board Director Lynda Kay serves as Moderator of the CAP, in a non-voting capacity, and as such provides a vital link between the Hospital Board and the CAP.



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6. What has the CAP done so far?

November 14 is the third of five full-day sessions of learning and discussion for the CAP members. Panelists have listened to presentations on services from NHH leaders and health service providers in our area, learned about the budget process and the current financial picture at NHH, and took a “behind-the-scenes” tour of the Hospital. Working in small groups, the CAP completed activities to gain a better understanding of the Ontario health care system and west Northumberland demographics. The CAP also learned about the Framework for Making Choices developed by the Local Health Integration Networks. An important part of the CAP’s remaining work is the completion of a Decision Making Framework for Service Prioritization. Developed in an iterative fashion, with input from the Board, physicians, staff and the community, the Framework will guide the NHH Board by identifying principles, values and considerations that should be applied when prioritizing Hospital services provided to the community within the funds available.

7. What is the Public Roundtable Meeting?

The Public Roundtable Meeting is a chance for all area residents to hear first-hand about the financial challenges facing NHH today, gain further understanding for why service changes are now required, and provide advice and input into the principles and values that will guide the Decision Making Framework for Service Prioritization. NHH is committed to engaging community members in a proactive, transparent and inclusive manner – that is why we have invited you to come and talk to the Panelists, learn more about the Hospital’s financial challenges, and meet some of the Hospital’s administrators and volunteer Directors. Your insight and input is highly valued and the conversations of this Public Roundtable Meeting will directly inform the CAP process.

8. After today's Public Roundtable Meeting, what are the next steps for the CAP?

Following today's input from the broader community, the CAP will:

- apply the Framework in determining which services are “core” and “non-core” for purposes of providing strategic direction to the Hospital;
- apply the Framework to develop contingency plan models/scenarios;
- prepare recommendations for the Board on potential service integration strategies for Hospital services with other health service providers; and
- provide a formal report to the Board of Directors outlining the Panelist’s advice and recommendations.

9. How can I follow the CAP?

Please go to the Northumberland Hills Hospital web site (www.nhh.ca) and look under the *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* section, or call 1-800-369-7136 for more information.

10. When will decisions be made regarding changes to services at NHH?

The CAP’s final report will be delivered to the Board in January 2010. The Board will also be informed by other stakeholders (physicians and other health service providers) in their deliberations. Any planned changes in Hospital services will require approval from the Central East Local Health Integration Network (www centraleastlhin.on.ca).



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