

**Free walk-in counselling services are available in
Northumberland County for youth, no referral required**

Walk-in counselling services for youth aged 7 to 18 are available on Tuesdays 8:00 AM-4:00 PM and Thursdays 10:00 AM-6:00 PM thanks to a creative local partnership between Northumberland Hills Hospital's Community Mental Health Services and Rebound Child & Youth Services.

With in-person, virtual and telephone support options, counselling sessions are available free of charge and no physician referral is required.

Accessed through a centralized telephone intake, the Mental Health Walk-in Clinic is physically located at Northumberland Hills Hospital's Community Mental Health offices at 1011 Elgin Street West, Suite 200, Cobourg.

Call 905-377-7784 or find information at: mentalhealthwalkinclinic.ca and on the websites of Northumberland Hills Hospital (nhh.ca) and Rebound Child & Youth Services (rcys.ca).



**COVID-19 on the rise among admitted inpatients –
Visitors reminded of NHH's universal masking policy**

The number of admitted patients at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) has risen in recent days as case counts increase in the region.

"Sadly, COVID-19 has not gone away," said Susan Walsh, President and CEO. While numbers fluctuate daily, NHH has a number of admitted patients confirmed positive for COVID-19. "Some are here because of COVID-19, some came to hospital for other reasons but were found to have COVID-19 through our screening procedures and, unfortunately, some (five individuals) appear to have contracted COVID-19 while inside the hospital through person-to-person transmission," explained Walsh in an August 4 media release.

NHH remains fully operational. As a high-risk setting, NHH's universal masking policy remains in place throughout the hospital and Community Mental Health offices.

Visitors will continue to have access to free masks on entry to the hospital and NHH's Community Mental Health offices and will be asked to keep their medical-grade mask on at all times (or over top of their personal cloth mask) while inside, unless eating or drinking in designated areas. No eating or drinking is permitted by visitors in patient rooms. In-person visiting is paused for inpatients confirmed positive.

For a related news release on COVID-19 and details on NHH's Visiting Guidelines, including exceptions, please see our website. Updates on NHH's COVID-19 status will continue to be shared through the hospital's website and related social media channels.

Reflections on a year like no other

August 3rd, 2022 marked my first full year as NHH's President and CEO and the overwhelming emotion I have when reflecting on all that has taken place these past 12 months is gratitude.



I knew when I took on this role that NHH was a very special place... made so by the incredible people who choose NHH as their focus for work, volunteering or donor support. But I can honestly say I was not prepared for just how remarkable this team really is and how important our relationships are with the larger community and partners who are also committed to exceptional patient care.

In 12 months this team has skillfully adapted to an ever-changing COVID-19 response, introduced a new state-of-the-art Clinical Information System now shared across seven hospital partners in our region, embarked on a unique strategic planning process in collaboration with our partners in the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland, and grappled with the most significant Health Human Resource shortages Ontario has ever experienced, all while sustaining and growing the inpatient and outpatient services our community relies on us to provide.

Never has it been more important to have a strong, skilled and well-staffed hospital team. Our population is aging and growing and, as a result, patient volumes and acuity are on the rise.

Our critical shortfall, unfortunately, is in the very thing that makes us special: our people. There are many reasons for this, and some of them existed long before the pandemic. Some are retiring, others are leaving the health care profession for other opportunities, and who could blame them after more than 2 years of pandemic pressures. As I write this, NHH's overall vacancy rate (even before we take COVID-19 absences into account) is close to 6%, a rate that rises even higher in select areas like critical care.

As we look forward in our next strategic plan to grow NHH into the hospital this community will need in the future I am very conscious of the need to put people first... to work creatively not just within our own teams but also with our partners in inter-related sectors like home and community care and long-term-care, to re-think how we can safely deliver critical services without exhausting the very people who have dedicated their lives to caring for others.

People, as was said in our recent *Annual Report to the Community*, make this place. I am grateful for the privilege to lead this team, but I do not lead alone. We are stronger together and this fact has never been more apparent to me than in the past 12 months.

Susan Walsh, President and CEO