



NEW LOCATION BUILDS FURTHER ON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS



Scott Pepin (front) with members of NHH's Assertive Community Treatment Team in one of the new counselling areas recently renovated at 1011 Elgin Street West, Cobourg.

Benefits directly related to the April 2010 integration with Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences were the focus of a presentation delivered to the December meeting of the Northumberland Hills Hospital Board of Directors by Scott Pepin, Director of NHH's Community Mental Health Services.

NHH engaged Ontario Shores in June 2008 to conduct an operational review of the mental health programs at NHH. What resulted was a comprehensive three-month review including a local service analysis and operational recommendations to enhance the program by increasing linkages with Ontario Shores, the regional mental health centre in Whitby.

In December 2008 a director was recruited from Ontario Shores to take on management responsibility of NHH's Community Mental Health Services and to implement the recommendations identified in the service analysis.

After 12 months of very positive results, NHH and Ontario Shores agreed to formalize the relationship in the form of a voluntary integration. In April 2010 the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) approved the integration between NHH and Ontario Shores.

Mr. Pepin summarized the many enhancements gained through the integration in five areas, paraphrased below. Speaking to the net result, Helen Brenner, Vice President, Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive at NHH said: "These investments signal--for staff and clients alike--the importance of the mental health program to NHH and the community."

Crisis intervention service improvements

Clients experiencing a mental health crisis often look to the NHH Emergency Department (ED) for support. Improvements to the crisis room in the ED were one of the opportunities identified in the Ontario Shores review, as was increased crisis support in the NHH ED. Today, NHH employs a state-of-the-art crisis intervention model focused on risk management and direct linkages with local police departments. The ED crisis room has been redesigned to better suit patient and staff needs and a crisis policy has been developed and implemented for reference by all ED staff. Many patients are now able to avoid the ED entirely. In 2011 alone, 190 crisis assessments were completed

in the ED -- a service not previously available at NHH. A further 97 patients were successfully diverted from the NHH Emergency Department entirely as a result of a community visit from NHH's mental health crisis clinician, summoned for assistance by police, a family physician or other community resources.

Patient intake enhancements

Another recommendation to come out of the 2008 review was the need for a centralized intake process for local clients. The position of Intake/Crisis Coordinator has since been created at NHH, together with a centralized external referral form. An open registration process is also now in place, allowing clients to meet one-on-one with a clinician or complete the required documentation over the telephone and contacts across the various mental health programs offered at NHH have increased by 74%.

Staff development and resources improvements

NHH staff members are now able to participate in a range of professional development opportunities at Ontario Shores, including training in best practice therapies. As well, staff and psychiatrists have access to experts in specialty areas of mental health, increasing the level of service available close to home, and greatly improving convenience to local patients.

Health record changes

Improved consistency of documentation practices has been introduced as a result of the successful integration of a new documentation template brought to the NHH program from Ontario Shores. Training has also been rolled out to all NHH mental health staff, emphasizing the importance of clear and accurate reporting using common terminology.

Space upgrades

The final mental health service enhancement highlighted by Mr. Pepin related to recent investments made to the physical space housing NHH's program. Previously located in two separate offices off the main hospital site, NHH's mental health team was co-located last month to a newly renovated space at 1011 Elgin Street West in Cobourg. The new location is accessible, brighter and much more conducive to the specialized programming required.

GOOD HAND HYGIENE PRACTICES IMPORTANT IN HOSPITAL AND THE COMMUNITY

Message from Robert Biron, President and CEO

Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus (VRE) was identified on two medical units at NHH earlier this month. The patients affected are not sick from the bacteria and are carriers only. While not required to publicly report cases of non-symptomatic or dormant VRE, NHH is bringing the outbreak to the public's attention in an effort to reiterate the importance of hand hygiene now and at all times in the hospital environment and in the community.

NHH remains fully operational, with programs and services across the hospital unaffected. Visitors are welcome throughout with control measures in place to minimize the spread of this outbreak, including:

- **Proactive communication** - Outbreak notices have been placed at all hospital entrances and the doorways of the affected and surrounding units, with prominent reminders regarding hand hygiene practices.
- **Contact precautions** - All identified cases have been placed on contact precautions (isolation).
- **Enhanced environmental cleaning** - Increased cleaning of the units and any equipment shared between patients is ongoing.

Monitoring for VRE continues, with testing of new patients required in selected units on admission as well as on all admitted patients, hospital-wide, on a weekly basis. Two consecutive weeks with no new cases are required before the outbreak may be declared over. With new patients still being identified this week it is likely to be 2012 before the "all clear" is announced.

VRE is very difficult to kill or remove from the environment. It is transmitted through direct contact with the bacteria, particularly through contaminated surfaces. **Proper hand hygiene remains the single most important infection prevention and control practice to stop the cycle of transmission, both in the hospital and out in the community.** We thank all our visitors for observing the hand hygiene reminders and helping us to break the cycle of this outbreak. If you have questions or concerns, please direct them to Jennifer Gillard at 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca.

Upcoming NHH Foundation Events

NHH Night with the Cobourg Cougars - Monday, January 2nd

\$2 from every ticket sold goes to the NHH Foundation, and kids 12 and under get in free! This is a great Christmas gift idea for that hard-to-buy-for person on your list! Tickets are available at the NHH Foundation office, or at the Cobourg Community Centre.

For more information on these and other Foundation events, please visit the Foundation section at www.nhh.ca or call the Foundation office at 905-372-6811, ext. 3065.

Upcoming NHH Auxiliary Events

Polar Bear Dip - Saturday, February 18th

Save the date and think warm thoughts... the NHH Auxiliary is once again welcoming brave souls into the balmy waters of Lake Ontario this February, 2012! Registration forms are now available on the Volunteers pages of nhh.ca. Minimum pledge: \$50.



Want to be the first to get updates on your hospital's news?

Sign up for NHH's e-newsletter at www.nhh.ca - it's free, and it's delivered straight to your email in-box on the day of release.