

**NHH welcomes new  
Vice President Patient Services  
& Chief Nursing Executive**



*Helen Brenner with NHH President and CEO Robert Biron*

Staff and volunteers maximized the opportunity of two “meet and greet” sessions in the hospital Bistro earlier this month to extend a warm welcome to Helen Brenner, NHH’s new Vice President of Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive. Previously with Lakeridge Health Corporation in Oshawa (2001 – 2009) and Markham Stouffville Hospital (1990 – 2001), Helen brings with her more than 18 years of health care leadership experience, including strong strategic planning, quality, risk and resource management skills. Helen joined NHH on January 19.

**Bright Ideas recognized at NHH**

Kim Doucette (Pharmacy), Nina Chernipeski (Intensive KCare) and Teresa Harvey (Complex Care) became the latest staff members recognized for their Bright Idea suggestions in a presentation ceremony in the hospital cafeteria January 8.

NHH works hard to distinguish itself through consistent, patient-focused care delivered with dignity and compassion. Behind the policies and procedures that guide hospital staff each day are simple, good ideas that started with a thought and spread, through discussion and the involvement of others, into something even greater. NHH’s Bright Ideas Program celebrates these good ideas, and brings structure to a previously informal process for carrying them forward to the hospital’s team for evaluation, implementation and recognition. Suggestions must be useful, practical and constructive and they should clearly demonstrate how the hospital can better serve its patients, employees or community.

More than 20 ideas have come forward from staff in the last month and a half alone, focusing on a range of areas but sharing in common a desire to eliminate waste, or improve efficiency, safety and productivity.

*(l-r) Director of HR Elizabeth Vosburgh with Bright Idea award recipients Kim Doucette and Nina Chernipeski following a January presentation by President and CEO Robert Biron. Missing from the photo: Teresa Harvey.*



**A message from**

**President and CEO Robert Biron  
and Board Chair Sid Trevail**

In December we launched the *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* initiative—a hospital-wide collaborative strategy to balance our 2009/2010 budget.

Considerable savings have already been realized by staff and management in fiscal year 2008/2009. An operating deficit budgeted at \$1.5 million was reduced to \$900,000 without impact to patient services. Unfortunately, NHH’s projected operating deficit for fiscal year 2009/2010 is estimated at \$2.0 million—or 3.6 per cent of the total budget.

In presentations and meetings that began at year’s end and will continue into March, staff, management and physicians are being charged to work together on an imposing task: find additional savings so that NHH may meet its financial obligations and avoid potential changes in the health services provided.

There is still considerable work to be done before we can say with confidence that we’ve exhausted all possible options for efficiencies and other creative solutions. The initial response to this call to action has been very encouraging. Excellent ideas are coming forward from many areas of the hospital team to find efficiencies without detracting from patient care. Some examples of these, such as our Bright Ideas program and our recent trial with the LEAN continuous improvement program, are highlighted for you in this newsletter.

We are all sensitive to the fact that we cannot permit ourselves to spend beyond our means today if we are to meet our obligation to sustain the hospital into the future. At the same time, we are also mindful of the need to maintain quality. It is finding the right balance that poses the challenge, and doing so within the context of systemic pressures outside our individual hospital’s control.

Phase 1 of the hospital’s proposed operating budget for 2009/2010 is scheduled for presentation at the March Board meeting. As noted in past updates to our community, in the event that the first phase of our budget strategy fails to achieve the savings target of \$2 million, then a second phase of the strategy will be launched. This phase would include a community engagement process to explore options related to service changes. It is our goal to minimize the impact to patient services and our workforce.

**Emergency Department wait time project shows early success!**

The first LEAN “kaizen” event was held in the NHH Emergency Department (ED) this month. The goal? Reduce the waiting time for ambulatory mid-acuity patients in the busy department—a challenge facing most Ontario hospitals today.

In NHH’s pilot, a multi-disciplinary team of staff members considered the ED experience from the perspective of a patient in the target group. They then worked together to map out “key wastes” in the flow process under review, and solutions to remove these wastes or, at the very least, minimize their impact.

times for patients who can be cared for in a reclining chair, if able, after they’ve been assessed by the physician

Developed by Toyota and popularized by James P. Womack and Daniel T. Jones in their 1996 book *Lean Thinking*, LEAN is now bringing benefits to many other sectors, including health care. A process improvement system based on measurable outcomes, it includes a collaborative, team-based exercise known as a “kaizen” to develop an improvement method in a specific area that will bring a measurable benefit to the broader system.

The implementation of “rapid assessment zones” (or “RAZ” as they’ve been coined in hospitals) proved to be an effective strategy to expedite patient flow. Similar to the concept of a Fast Track, a “RAZ” provides a dedicated quick assessment and treatment area for mid-acuity patients who may not require a stretcher for the entire length of stay. The RAZ enables faster turnaround

The results of this LEAN initiative were very impressive. **The wait time for patients in the target group were reduced by approximately 30 per cent.** Linda Calhoun, NHH’s ED Director, will present the team’s results at the January Board meeting. The management team will now assess NHH’s ongoing commitment to LEAN as one initiative among many in its *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* budget strategy now underway.

**Career opportunities at your hospital**

- Pharmacists  
– full- and part-time
- Medical Radiation Technologist, Mammography  
– part-time
- Registered Nurses  
– various, full- and part-time, including: shift team leaders, ICU nurses and Emergency nurses.

*Other opportunities available. For more information and a full listing, go to the Careers section of the hospital website, [www.nhh.ca](http://www.nhh.ca)*

**Feedback on our hospital communications?**

Please email or call Jennifer Gillard, Director of Communications, at: [gillard@nhh.ca](mailto:gillard@nhh.ca) or 905-377-7757

**Upcoming NHH Foundation events**

**Friday, February 13 at 8:00 PM - Heart for the Hospital Valentine’s Dance** with The Royals at the Best Western Cobourg Inn. Tickets \$25/person, including late night buffet, available at the Best Western or the Foundation Office.

**Saturday, February 14 at 6:30 PM - An Evening of Wine and Roses** at Cobourg Lions Community Centre. An evening of wine tasting, great appetizers and the wonderful dance sounds of The Big Easy Seven! Host for the evening is local wine connoisseur Bruce Maclean. Tickets \$70/per person available at the Lions Centre, Trimmer Barber Shop or any Lions Club Member.

**Monday, February 16 at 11:00 AM – Cobourg Police Lawmen vs. NHH All-Stars Charity Hockey Game** followed by a family skate at the Cobourg Memorial Arena. Free with Cobourg Winter Festival wrist band or a donation to the hospital at the door.

*For more information call 905-377-7767.*

**Upcoming NHH Auxiliary events**

**February 22 at 12 noon  
2nd Annual Polar Bear Dip,**  
Heritage Harbour, Cobourg

*For information please contact the Auxiliary office at 905-372-6811, ext. 4630 or go online to [www.nhhauxiliarypolarbeardip.com](http://www.nhhauxiliarypolarbeardip.com)*