



LOCAL STUDENT OFF TO MED. SCHOOL THIS FALL

*Credits Dr. Mark Essak and NHH's VIP Program for Offering
Inside Look into the Profession*



In line with our strategic priority of "Our Team, Our Strength" which aims, in part, to "retain and attract exceptional people to our team," NHH has a number of programs in place to encourage local students to pursue health-related careers. Coordinated by the Human Resources (HR) department, the programs draw hundreds of students into the hospital each year through opportunities such as the high school co-op program as well as university and college preceptor programs.

Another option for local students considering a career in a health-related field is NHH's unique VIP program. Designed for students enrolled in their senior high school years or already attending community college or university, the VIP program targets youth with serious designs on a health-related career.

Offering a unique opportunity to shadow health professionals while they work, interested students are required to outline their interests, in writing, and the goals they wish to achieve should they be selected for the VIP initiative. Proof of enrolment in school (secondary, community college or university) is required, together with letters of reference from a recent educational institution and a signed confidentiality agreement.

Matched by NHH HR with a mentor in their area of interest, NHH's VIP students are invited in to observe the professional in the hospital setting and ask questions they might not otherwise have a chance to pose without such connections. While technically limited to a maximum of two, two-hour in-hospital sessions, the relationships struck during the VIP relationship often prove highly rewarding for both the students and the participating professionals and many continue long beyond the official beginning and end date.

Such was the case with local student **Mason Curtis**, shown with his mentor **Dr. Mark Essak** in the photo above.

Mason, a graduate of Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West, was one of the inaugural participants in NHH's VIP program back in 2002, which earned him an opportunity to shadow local physician Dr. Mark Essak while he was in the role of Chief of Staff at the previous Cobourg hospital site.

Said Dr. Essak: "Mason's active and querying mind was evident from Grade 9 when he joined me in the Emergency Department. His questions were thoughtful and perceptive beyond his years.... Mason was selected for the shadowing program not only for his interest in medicine but also because he was an intelligent young man with many leadership attributes. His marks were consistently strong while he pursued excellence in various sports. In addition he served in an executive position on his school council while for several years also dedicated time to help the hospital raise funds through various events and committees."

Mason has since gone on to complete an undergraduate degree in Life Sciences at Queen's University in Kingston and, more recently, gained acceptance into its School of Medicine, which he is set to attend this fall.

Did his experience with NHH and Dr. Essak have an influence on that decision? Mason's very quick to respond: "Definitely! The program provided an inside look into what being a physician actually involves. I'm very grateful to both NHH and Dr. Essak for giving me that opportunity."

For details on the student opportunities at NHH, contact Elizabeth Vosburgh, Vice President, Human Resources, or go to www.nhh.ca

NO CONFIRMED CASES OF C. DIFFICILE AT NHH

Message from Dr. David Broderick, NHH Chief of Staff

Clostridium difficile (C. difficile) and other hospital-acquired infections have been earning front-page news across Canada in recent weeks, stemming from a serious and deadly outbreak situation at Niagara Health Services and a handful of other hospitals in the province.

Northumberland Hills Hospital's good performance with regard to nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections is a matter of public record and I am pleased to say that, thanks to a collective effort, our record is exceptional. For NHH's latest data, go to www.nhh.ca and click on About NHH, then Quality Indicators. Rates for clostridium difficile infection (CDI) have been declining steadily at our hospital since 2008, and today we are consistently at or below the provincial average with zero to less than five CDI cases. Eight of the past 12 months tracked had zero cases and, while ongoing vigilance is required, there are no confirmed cases of C. difficile at NHH at this time. Likewise, rates of MRSA and VRE (other antibiotic-resistant bacteria) have been zero for over a year.

As several hospitals in our province are presently experiencing, however, when an outbreak takes hold it can have swift and deadly consequences. The reality is that dangerous bacteria are present in our community and ongoing vigilance is required to keep all patients safe from antibiotic-resistant infections. NHH's infection prevention

and control practices are well known by all members of our hospital team and include strict adherence to our antibiotic stewardship policy (for physicians), hand hygiene protocols (before and after patient contact), and housekeeping best practices.

That said, we all have a role to play when it comes to infection prevention. One of the easiest and most effective steps we can take to minimize C. difficile and other potentially harmful bacteria is simple hand washing. C. difficile can contaminate surfaces, such as toilets, handles and doorknobs. When we touch these items our hands can become contaminated. We can unknowingly spread the bacteria to other surfaces or, if we touch our mouth or eyes without washing, we can become infected. For most people C. difficile does not present a health risk. For some, particularly those with underlying illnesses, the bacteria can be very harmful. By washing our hands and practicing good hygiene we can greatly reduce our chances of picking up any bacteria, not just C. difficile.

For this and other information on C. difficile, and useful advice on how you can help beat it, visit the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care website at: www.health.gov.on.ca. For the latest on NHH's performance, please bookmark our website, www.nhh.ca.



Upcoming NHH Foundation Events

- 15th Annual Fisher's Foodland Golf for Health Tournament**
Wednesday, July 20th
- 4th Annual Chris Mansey Memorial Golf Tournament**
Sunday, August 28th
- 11th Annual Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation Gala
"Come Together"**
Saturday, November 12th

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

Upcoming NHH Auxiliary Events

Tag Days
Thursday, September 8th and
Friday, September 9th

For more information on the NHH Auxiliary, please visit the Volunteers section at www.nhh.ca or call the Auxiliary office at 905-372-6811, ext. 4630.

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and it's delivered straight to your email in-box on the day of release!