



LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ENHANCED THROUGH REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Patients of Northumberland Hills Hospital's Mental Health program are benefiting from an exciting new regional collaboration. Officially approved in late April, 2010 by the Board of the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN), the collaboration—considered a “voluntary integration” by the LHIN—began to take shape over the past year as the organizations explored new ways to improve mental health services in our community.

In a briefing note submitted to a May meeting of the Quality and Patient Safety Committee of the NHH Board, Vice President of Patient Services Helen Brenner shared some of the improvements in patient care, accessibility and staff safety that the work with Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Ontario Shores) has already realized.

While still in its early days, the collaboration between NHH and Ontario Shores is proving to be exactly what NHH hoped it could achieve. It has facilitated the implementation of best practices, increased satisfaction and retention of staff, increased clinical accountability and increased the sustainability of mental health services for our community. From the patients' perspective, it has also improved access to specialized mental health services and decreased fragmentation of care. Specific examples of these improvements include:

- a re-design of the intake process within the NHH mental health programs that has already increased client access to mental health services, on average, by 53.6% (detail below);
- new access for NHH staff and physicians to specialized mental health and psychiatric consultations in the areas of adolescent and forensic psychiatry and dual diagnosis;

- enhanced use of the Ontario Telemedicine Network video technology to connect patients and clinicians between remote sites;
- new training for NHH staff in safety management; and
- a new crisis intervention model designed and implemented in NHH's Emergency Department.

NHH's Mental Health program enhancements are even more evident from the perspective of the year-over-year results of the individual services offered. Below is a snapshot of NHH services over the last two fiscal years.

Direct Service	Counselling & Treatment	Case Management	Crisis	Early Psychosis Intervention	Assertive Community Treatment Team	Supportive Housing
2008/2009	6,847	374	279	815	8,861	1,515
2009/2010	12,477	1,562	376	1,130	11,105	2,066
% Increase	+82.2%	+317.6%	+34.7%	+38.6%	+25.3%	+36.4%

Using an integrated program management model, Ontario Shores provides the management leadership of the Mental Health program at NHH, while staff and operating funding remain with NHH.

Positive feedback from patients, family members and community partners, such as the local police, continues to demonstrate that this regional collaboration has been a “win-win” for all. For more information on the Mental Health program at NHH, please go to www.nhh.ca or contact info@nhh.ca.

ALTERNATIVE LEVEL OF CARE STRATEGY UPDATE

A key component of the 2010/11 budget and service plan announced by NHH in March of this year was a commitment from both the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) and NHH to work together to address the growing number of Alternative Level of Care (ALC) patients.

ALC patients are those individuals who have completed their acute care treatment, but remain in hospital waiting for placement in community-based services.

On the assumption that additional community capacity for interim long-term care (iLTC) beds and convalescent care beds could be found by the Central East LHIN in the NHH catchment area, NHH had planned to close 11 iLTC beds and 23 ALC beds. The ALC beds identified for closure were located in NHH's acute inpatient units and the Complex Continuing Care unit. Eight (8) new restorative care beds were included in the plan to be opened at NHH. New community bed capacity was an essential condition for the implementation of this plan.

Despite Central East LHIN calls for proposals issued this spring, a preferred, well-defined and near-term option for operating iLTC beds and convalescent beds did not surface in the west Northumberland area.

At a meeting on Tuesday, May 18, the Board of the Central East LHIN endorsed a motion that will see the Central East LHIN and NHH begin a dialogue on NHH retaining the current iLTC beds and adding new restorative care beds as part of the NHH's revised ALC strategy. New one-time funding will be provided to NHH through the CE LHIN's Aging at Home program.

Implementation of other components of NHH's comprehensive ALC strategy aimed at supporting seniors in the community and reducing ED wait times will proceed. Examples include: the Hospital to Home initiative, which focuses on supporting patients in their discharge to home; the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP), an innovative model of care that assists in maintaining the mental and physical function of older adults at high risk of decline during hospital stays; and the opening of new restorative care beds, focused on returning individuals to their highest level of independence in the community.

Other service realignments included in the NHH plan are unaffected, namely the closure of the Diabetes Education Clinic and Outpatient Rehabilitation service, and the integration of Fast Track into the Emergency Department.

NHH and the Central East LHIN will now begin planning and discussions to develop alternative ALC strategies in order to continue to meet patients' and community needs, balance the operating budget and achieve the Hospital's obligations in the Hospital Service Accountability Agreement.

NHH remains committed to its original objective of addressing the ALC challenge. We must ensure that our acute care beds remain available for their intended purpose, and not have them overtaken by a growing ALC problem. That said, our Board has always said that in the event that the Central East LHIN is not successful in finding alternative bed capacity in the community, NHH would revisit its plan. While the finer details of the revised ALC strategy and funding must still be agreed to by the parties, this is an effective bridge until a longer term solution can be put in place in the community by the Central East LHIN.

Robert Biron, President and CEO



Radiologist Dr. Frank Marrocco and Senior Computed Tomography (CT) Technologist Faye Andrews are this year's recipients of NHH's Outstanding Innovation Award. Honoured for their dedicated contribution to NHH's CT service, they were recognized earlier this month at NHH's Long Service and Outstanding Innovation Award ceremony. For more, please see www.nhh.ca or watch for the complete listing in the Hospital's Annual Report, coming out this June.

Upcoming NHH Foundation Events

Northumberland's Biggest Coffee Morning
In Memory of Jim Boughen and Alf Blything
Tuesday, June 15.
Visit www.nhhcoffee.ca

Hike for Health ~ No Cop Out!
presented by the Cobourg Lakeshore Lions
Saturday, June 19.
Visit www.hikeforhealth.ca

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

Upcoming NHH Auxiliary Events

Wine Tasting in the Park
Tuesday, June 29, 7:30 - 9:30 PM,
Lions Refreshment Tent, Victoria Park,
Cobourg. Tickets \$30 at Little Treasure Shop
and Petticoat Lane.