



HOSPITAL'S VOLUNTEER CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM FIVE MONTHS OLD AND GROWING

When NHH announced plans to launch its first Volunteer Chaplaincy Program last November, program directors knew there would be interest—they didn't know it would be this enthusiastic!

Officially launched with a call for volunteers one year ago in November 2009, the Program—designed with the assistance of the Cobourg Ministerial Association—builds on the spiritual support currently brought to patients at NHH through clergy from the area's many faith communities.

Working on a rotational basis for periods of one week, a roster of 11 volunteer chaplains now offer care to patients, families and staff who are in need of spiritual care and who have lost contact with or do not have access to a representative of a faith community. They have further used their own connections to solicit additional interest from colleagues and peers.

Available 24 hours a day by pager for emergency or critical situations, these volunteers have quickly become integrated into the care programs at NHH, providing spiritual support to individuals or families as requested, raising general awareness of the Spiritual Care Program through regular visits on the patient

care units and even coordinating on-site memorial services in the hospital's Spiritual Care Centre.

"Science and spirit, medicine and faith are inextricably linked in the pursuit of care for the whole person," says Janet Burn, NHH Nursing Program Director. "The work of a chaplain

enhances and strengthens this important connection. Having the Volunteer Chaplains as a new partner in our health care team has helped to round out the services we are able to provide to our patients. They are making a difference in the support we are able to provide to our families. We are thrilled to have them join our family at NHH."



Back row (L-R): Rev. Bill Service, Rev. Adam Prasuhn, Rev. Bill Ball and Rev. Erwen Butler
Front row (L-R): Rev. Nancy Lester, Eileen Simpson, Rev. Mary Ryback, Rev. Marg Tandy and Rev. Andrew Truder

GRADE NINE STUDENTS GET INSIDERS' VIEW OF POSSIBLE CAREERS IN HEALTH CARE



Grade 9 students from area high schools spent Wednesday, November 3rd at NHH for the annual Take Our Kids to Work day, experiencing first-hand the joys and responsibilities of a career at an Ontario hospital. "I enjoy this day so much," said Elizabeth Vosburgh, Vice President of Human Resources and Quality at NHH. "These kids have such great questions and enthusiasm it makes me very confident about the future. This program is an excellent way to introduce students to career opportunities at a time when they are making important decisions. It's a win-win for the students, and NHH, and we're pleased to be part of it."

Upcoming NHH Foundation Events

7th Annual Reindeer Fun Run
Saturday, November 27, 2010

Register at www.runningroom.com or call 905-372-6811, ext. 3065.

Annual Light up a Life Ceremony at Northumberland Hills Hospital
Wednesday, December 8, 2010 at 7:00 PM.

Upcoming NHH Auxiliary Events

Poinsettia Tea

Grand Ballroom, Best Western Inn, Cobourg
Sunday, November 28, 2:30 to 4:30 PM.

Tickets, \$30/each,
available at the lottery kiosk at NHH.

NHH TREATMENT TIMES HIGHLY RATED AGAINST PROVINCIAL BENCHMARKS

Message from Robert Biron, President and CEO

Treatment time for health services is an issue that has gained significant public attention in recent years, and rightly so. Just last week one of our national daily newspapers featured a lengthy article on Emergency Department (ED) wait times, and the "marathon of suffering" that some experience with an ED visit in certain parts of the country.

For many services—Emergency Department wait times included—I'm pleased to report that NHH is not just a regional leader, but also performing very well from a provincial perspective.

Cataract surgery wait time is one example that illustrates the accessible and high calibre service that is available locally, right here at NHH. In the last quarter (July 1 through September 30, 2010) NHH was ranked best in the province in terms of wait times—specifically, 9 out of 10 NHH patients had their cataract surgery completed within 39 days, compared to 127 days provincially.

Another example of NHH's strong performance is Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) examinations. In the last quarter (July 1 through September 30) NHH's Diagnostic Imaging Department was ranked 4th in the province for MRI wait times, with 9 out of 10 NHH patients receiving their MRI examination within 44 days compared to 126 days provincially. For Computed Tomography (CT or CAT scans), 9 out of 10 NHH patients are seen within 15 days compared to 41 days provincially.

Wait times for surgeries performed at NHH are also relatively short in our community. Again, looking at the last quarter, we were ranked 5th province-wide in terms of the wait time for gall bladder surgery (9 out of 10 patients are completed within 38 days versus 95 days across the province) and gastrointestinal cancer surgeries are performed within 34 days for 9 out of 10 patients (compared to 46 days provincially).

Finally, NHH's ED wait times are among the lowest in the province. In the context of the ED, "wait time" is defined by the time from which the patient is initially assessed by an ED triage nurse to the time the patient is discharged. In other words, ED wait time means treatment time and not just the time waiting in the waiting room.

The treatment time includes the necessary time to complete, process and interpret test results and exams, for example laboratory and diagnostic imaging, in order for the physician to diagnose the patient's ailment. It also includes the time needed to access other members of the health care team, such as specialists, to help complete the diagnosis and treatment plan.

Using September results, for patients who are discharged from the ED after treatment (and not admitted to the hospital), NHH completed the treatment for 9 out of 10 patients in 6.9 hours for complex conditions and 4.1 hours for the more minor complaints. Provincial targets for both are 8 and 4 hours respectively with the actual provincial wait times currently sitting at 11.7 hours and 4.3 hours respectively.

Some of the recent enhancements that have aided us in achieving these relatively short ED treatment time levels include the incorporation of a Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) Nurse to our ED team. The GEM nurse is specially trained to address the unique needs of the elderly. A second enhancement within our ED is the recent investment in a mental health Crisis Clinician. Trained to work directly with ambulance and local police services in assisting mental health patients in crisis, the Crisis Clinician has been directly involved in successfully diverting visits to the ED by working with patients in the community.

While we're performing well against the province's wait time targets, we want to do even better. And, we know we can do better. A process improvement initiative is now well under way in the NHH ED, and the team is implementing new systems and processes that will further reduce patient wait times.

I encourage you to monitor your hospital's quality indicator reports on a regular basis and see for yourself how we are faring against provincial benchmarks. Details are available to you in the form of web-based reports published by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and on our own hospital website, www.nhh.ca (see Quality Indicators under About NHH).

The performance outlined above by our health care team is exceptional. I extend my sincere thanks to all of our staff, physician and volunteers who contribute to this success and for their on-going commitment to providing our community accessible, timely health services.