

Northumberland Hills Hospital welcomes new Board Chair, Jack Russell

Jack Russell is the new chair of the Northumberland Hills Hospital's Board of Directors. A long-time resident of Northumberland, Jack holds a degree in civil engineering from Queen's University in Kingston, and a Master's of Business Administration from West Virginia University.

Skilled in project management, strategic planning and continuous process improvement, Jack spent close to 20 years as Vice-President, Operations and Co-Owner of Limpact International Limited, a Cobourg-based manufacturing business. Prior to joining Limpact he was employed by Borg Warner Chemicals/GE Plastics for 13 years in various technical and management roles in the U.S. and Canada, culminating as Plant Manager of Cobourg Operations.

A recipient of the James Crossen Lifetime Achievement Award recognizing his long-term business excellence in this community, Jack has already served west Northumberland in a number of volunteer roles. His contributions include: past president of the Rotary Club of Cobourg (2002/03); past director, Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation; industry sector campaign leader for the Cobourg Public Library fundraising team; and a member of the Cobourg Economic Development Advisory Committee. A member of the NHH Board of Directors since 2009, Jack's involvement with NHH goes back to 2002 when he was an active member of the fundraising campaign associated with the construction of the hospital.

What follows is the transcript of an interview Jack recently conducted with *In Touch* to share his perspective of our community hospital and the Board's priorities in the coming year as he begins his term as chair. Watch the October edition of *In Touch* for more on the 2014/15 Board and Community Committee volunteers responsible for leading NHH into the future, or visit the hospital website at nhh.ca.



Jack Russell is the new chair of the Northumberland Hills Hospital's Board of Directors, the volunteer body responsible for developing hospital policy, strategic planning, and monitoring operational and financial performance.

Q. The Board Chair role requires a big time commitment (40+ hours a month, at minimum). What inspired you to take on this important and time-intensive role in our community?

A. Over the past 20 years, I have come to realize how important an asset this hospital is to our community. I felt compelled to get involved and offer whatever support I could to assist in ensuring the long-term sustainability of NHH.

Q. What do you see as NHH's biggest strengths?

A. My family has lived in this community for the better part of 35 years, and any time I have had occasion to visit our hospital I have been amazed with the high quality of patient care and desire to help that the staff exhibit whether it be in the Emergency Department, in outpatient services, in the maternity ward, or when visiting friends. That level of personal care, which is further augmented by the dedicated physicians in the community who provide hospital support, is something that makes NHH stand out in my mind.

Q. What are the most significant challenges facing NHH and, by extension, the Board that governs it?

A. In the past five years, I have come to realize how complex our health care system is in the way it is funded and regulated by the provincial government. That funding system is currently undergoing fundamental change which should lead to a hospital which is funded for the type and quantity of services that we actually provide. However, as we progress through this change period, and as our government grapples with the absolute need to balance the provincial budget, all hospitals and particularly community based hospitals such as NHH will be under extreme pressure to find unique ways to serve an aging population without increasing spending.

Q. What are your particular goals as chair?

A. First and foremost, my priority as chair is to ensure our hospital is in a position to achieve its mission of Exceptional patient care. Every time. Related to that, I would like to see our community recognized for developing a truly innovative way of managing the health care services of an aging population through a more integrated, patient-centred approach to care delivery. The Northumberland PATH project (Partners Advancing Transitions in Healthcare) has the potential to do this. Funded by The Change Foundation, PATH is testing how to better link seniors with multiple chronic conditions and their caregivers to the health services they require. It could serve as a model to provide these services more efficiently and in a way better suited to the patient. We are privileged to be part of it. As well, I would like to see the development of new facilities on hospital land, to provide new revenue streams to support our key services. And, as the future unfolds, I hope we see less emphasis on "the hospital" as a standalone entity, and an increasing emphasis on NHH as an integrated part of a community health care system.

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