



NEWS RELEASE

New transitional care option available to eligible patients awaiting long-term care in hospital, thanks to temporary local partnership

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, February 6th, 2019 – Acute care hospitals like Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) are designed for people with urgent or acute health care needs.

In recent years, however, acute care hospitals have become a fallback and less-than-ideal ‘home’ for those awaiting an alternate level of care—in most cases, a long-term care bed—as the need for these spaces has exceeded the current system’s capacity.

Additional long-term care beds have recently been announced for Northumberland County. This is welcome news, but new construction takes time and the reality is that these new beds will not be built and operational for several years.

Currently at NHH 25 to 30 per cent of available acute care beds are actually occupied by alternate level of care (ALC) patients who do not, in fact, require acute care service. In other words, only 75 per cent of the intended acute care bed capacity at NHH is technically accessible to acute care patients.

This situation has resulted in lengthening wait times for those entering hospital through the Emergency Department (ED), an increase in patients who must be admitted to a bed in a crowded and noisy ED, and mounting frustration for patients, their loved ones and the health professionals who care for them.

A new transitional care option was recently introduced, thanks to a temporary partnership between NHH and the retirement home arm of Extencare Cobourg, [The Landmark Seniors’ Residence](#). While longer-term solutions to provincial ALC pressures are developed, this is a release valve with immediate, tangible benefits for the patients, their families and the local health system.

Through the partnership, up to four ALC patients at NHH now have the option of being transferred to a temporary home at The Landmark.

In so doing, four acute care beds at NHH will be freed up for patients who need urgent, acute care, while, at the same time, the quality of life for the eligible patients will be improved by offering a more home-like environment in which to wait for a more permanent long-term care placement, and other supports beneficial to their overall health and independence, including daily programming to support social and emotional well-being.

Patients eligible for the beds at The Landmark will have placement for long-term care papers completed and assessed as appropriate. A repatriation agreement is in place to support transfer back to the hospital should a patient's needs change or the program funding is not sustained. At present, funding has been granted through the [Central East Local Health Integration Network](#) until March 31, 2019, with the potential that this will continue—and possibly expand to other area partners—until additional long-term care capacity is introduced.

The new option brings no additional cost to the participating patients. Patients would be expected to pay a daily fee to The Landmark equal to the current 'co-payment' they are required to pay in the hospital as an alternate level of care patient awaiting transfer to long-term care.

Eligibility for patients to be transferred to The Landmark is based on a range of clinical factors. A matching process is in place, to identify the most appropriate ALC patients for the program and to bring it to their attention for consideration. Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to temporarily transfer to The Landmark is up to the eligible patient and their loved ones.

“This is a new, temporary option for some families whose loved ones are receiving care in hospital simply because there is no available long-term care bed for them in the area at this time,” said NHH President and CEO Linda Davis. “It’s a stop-gap, in our view, and one that NHH and other hospitals in the province are exploring in order to meet our accountability to acute care patients. Our aim is to free up bed space for those with acute care requirements—the care we exist to provide—while, at the same time, providing an alternate care space for ALC patients that is better suited to their current need.”

“We are very pleased to partner with the Northumberland Hills Hospital to help alleviate overcapacity challenges,” stated Michael Harris, Extendicare’s Vice-President of Long-Term Care Operations. “It’s a win-win-win in our view, to use excess capacity at The Landmark and create a temporary solution while new long-term care capacity is being built. We look forward to welcoming patients and their families to the Landmark community.”

“I would like to offer my congratulations to Northumberland Hills Hospital and The Landmark Seniors’ Residence for their partnership and innovative strategy in supporting NHH patients who are awaiting an alternate level of care,” stated David Piccini, Member of Provincial Parliament, Northumberland – Peterborough South. “Our government was elected to put the patient at the centre of a sustainable health care system. We have moved forward to address some of the immediate challenges faced by Ontario’s health care system through the creation of more beds to address hallway health care. We appreciate the support of all of our health care partners in creating new transitional care options.”

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About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

About Extendicare - Extendicare is a leading provider of care and services for seniors throughout Canada. Through our network of 118 operated senior care and living centres, as well as our home health care operations, we are committed to delivering care throughout the health care continuum to meet the needs of a growing seniors' population in Canada. Our qualified and highly trained workforce of 23,700 individuals is dedicated to helping people live better through a commitment to quality service and a passion for what we do.

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