



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Local Business Loans PAPRs to Help Protect Frontline Staff

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY – With the battle against COVID-19 occurring around the world, the importance of personal protective equipment (PPE) has been at the forefront of many conversations, public addresses, and media stories. Recognizing this and seeing the many callouts for supplies, one local business realized they were in a unique position to help protect staff at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH). Weir ESCO has stepped up to temporarily loan the hospital 20 Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs).

The PAPRs on loan are essentially a full head covering with a clear visor at the front, which fit snuggly over the neck, sitting on the shoulders. A battery-operated fan blows filtered air into the helmet-like portion, and the battery pack can be worn around the hips or as a backpack. With filtered circulating air, and the fit of the head covering, PAPRs provide a higher level of comfort to the wearer than other forms of PPE especially when PPE is needed to be worn over a long period of time.

“The timeliness and the speed at which this specialized PPE was made available to us at no cost is moving to see,” says Dr. Mukesh Bhargava, Chief of Staff at NHH. “There is not only a feeling of safety wearing one of these, but also of comfort. The smiles seen on the faces of staff who have worn them are genuine smiles of relief.”

“Some of our employee’s partners work at NHH and we know they, and their colleagues, will be there to take care of us if needed, so we felt the least we could do is help protect some of them,” shares Brad Wannamaker, Site Manager – Port Hope Operations at Weir ESCO. “We’re pleased to be able to assist in helping to protect the NHH team and we only wish we could do more.”

The Port Hope operation of Weir ESCO, a company that engineers, manufactures and services mission critical equipment used by companies in mining and infrastructure, uses PAPRs during their regular operations to protect their staff. Recognizing these could be utilized in a healthcare setting, Wannamaker was quick to contact the NHH Foundation on behalf of Weir ESCO with the offer to loan them to NHH to support the hospital’s pandemic response.

“From the onset of the pandemic, people in our community have been tripping over themselves to help,” says Dr. Michael Barrie, Chief of Anesthesiology at NHH. “From smaller ways of supporting, to innovative ideas, and contributions like this, it’s heartening to see this response and to feel the community’s support.”

In the hospital setting, PAPRs are a specialized PPE resource for frontline staff. At NHH, the ESCO PAPRs are being prepared for use by the critical care team – in particular, physicians, nurses, and respiratory therapists – working in areas of the hospital where patients confirmed or presumed to have COVID-19 might require aerosolized procedures, such as intubations.

“I feel very fortunate to live and work in this community,” shares Angie Gammage, Respiratory Therapist at NHH. “I continue to feel safe at work and I think a big part of that is knowing so many are supporting us.”

The use of PAPRs was already being discussed amongst the management team at NHH, with an investigation into the costs and time associated to acquire these underway before this generous offer was made by Weir ESCO. The hospital’s initial investigation estimated approximately a six week wait for any new PAPRs to be acquired. Given the unpredictability and speed at which things are developing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the fact that this process could be expedited to where 20 PAPRs could be offered, seen and assessed by a team from the hospital, picked up, and onsite at NHH in less than one week made a world of difference.

To ensure staff are trained in proper donning, doffing, and utilization of these PAPRs, an initial video training call was coordinated by NHH with the manufacturer last week, and training continues to take place with critical staff from each of the main areas where PAPRs will be utilized should circumstances warrant.

For more information on how you can make a gift to support NHH, visit: www.nhhfoundation.ca.

For the latest information on NHH’s response to COVID-19 and other ways to help, visit: www.nhh.ca/covid-19.

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About the Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation – The mission of the Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation is to inspire generous giving to enable exceptional patient care at Northumberland Hills Hospital. With a dedicated team of enthusiastic volunteers and staff, the NHH Foundation is passionately committed to improving health care and the quality of life for people living in west Northumberland. Since 2002, the NHH Foundation has raised over \$57 million to build and equip Northumberland Hills Hospital. This support comes from generous community support through a variety of programs including major gifts, planned giving, signature and third party events, direct mail and commemorative giving. For more information, visit: www.nhhfoundation.ca or like us on Facebook.

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).