



NHH

Northumberland
Hills Hospital

Senior Leadership Report to the Board

Our Shared Purpose: People First

**Our Values: Integrity, Quality, Respect,
Compassion and Teamwork**

June 2024

Connected care close to home

Minister of Health Sylvia Jones visits NHH with local MPP

On May 2, NHH had the opportunity to welcome Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones and David Piccini, MPP Northumberland-Peterborough South for a visit.

In our short time together we covered a lot of ground, discussing the impact (and importance) of Patient and Family Advisory Councils, both local and provincial; the much-needed expansion of NHH Surgical Services, now underway; the impact (in local students' voices) of Ontario's investment in NHH's intern, extern and clinical nurse scholar programs; and, the power of collaboration to meet priority needs.

NHH welcomes these opportunities, coordinated through our local MPP's office. Special thanks, too, to the large group of nursing students who participated in the meet-and-greet and shared their feedback on the impact of NHH's programs on their career and learning opportunities.

New Division of Palliative and Supportive Care created at NHH – Dr. Francesco Mulé appointed inaugural Head of Service

Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) recognized National Hospice Palliative Care Week 2024 in early May with the announcement of a new leadership role on its medical team.

Dr. Francesco Mulé, a member of NHH's medical team since 2011, has been appointed Head of Service for the new Division of Palliative and Supportive Care.

Recruited to the community in 2011 as an Emergency Department physician, Dr. Mulé has been successful in numerous critical leadership roles, most recently as informal lead for palliative care. Respected for his experience helping local patients and families navigate end-of-life care, pain and symptom management, he will build on this experience to work closely with patients, families, staff and medical colleagues in a newly expanded leadership role to further grow an interdisciplinary approach to the delivery of the palliative and end-of-life care in the hospital's six-bed Palliative Care Unit and, beyond that unit, throughout the hospital.

“Dr. Mulé’s proven medical expertise, strong clinical knowledge and commitment to person-centred care will be a key enabler to the expected growth and development of this Division and its linkage, beyond the Palliative Care Unit, to other units in the hospital and the services and supports offered by our community partners,” said Dr. Mukesh Bhargava, NHH’s Chief of Staff, in the related media release. “I thank the Board for approving the creation of this dedicated Division within NHH’s Post Acute Specialty Services program. It’s a model that follows one created with success in our growing Maternal/Child Care program.”

Approved on the recommendation of the Chief of Staff and Chief Nursing Executive at the April meeting of the NHH Board of Directors, this new appointment will also pave the way for the creation this spring of a new NHH Palliative and Supportive Care Quality Practice Committee (QPC). The QPC will be co-chaired by Dr. Mulé and the clinical leader for Post-Acute Specialty Services. Moving forward, Senior Leadership, Medical Advisory Committee and Board reporting will flow through this dedicated QPC regarding NHH’s Palliative and Supportive Care services.

“The addition of a new Division of Palliative and Supportive Care and QPC will bring transparency and structure to what was previously an ad hoc reporting process regarding Palliative and Supportive Care at NHH,” said Susan Walsh, President and CEO. “On behalf of our Senior Leadership Team I want to thank Dr. Mulé for accepting this important role. Families in our community are very appreciative of the choices they now have for palliative and end-of-life care in Northumberland. Even as community supports grow and expand, we appreciate there will always be a role for hospital-based palliative care as well. Since the doors were opened to NHH’s Palliative Care Unit over 20 years ago, Northumberland Hills Hospital has been committed to having an exceptional Palliative Care service. With Dr. Mule’s support, and that of our entire interdisciplinary team and volunteer partners, we intend to do all in our power to sustain that service and expand it, to ensure consistent service throughout the hospital, for all in our care.”

Third virtual conversation of 2024 in the Northumberland PACE Speakers Series, ‘Hearing Health’ held on Thursday, May 23 at 5:30 PM

The Northumberland PACE Speakers Series hosted its latest virtual conversation, ‘Hearing Health’ on Thursday, May 23 with guest speaker, Dr. Gavin Rukholm, MD, FRCSC.

Dr. Rukholm is an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist, who has been practicing for over ten years and possesses a keen interest in pediatric ENT, Otolaryngology and Rhinoplasty surgery. Dr. Rukholm completed medical school at the University of Ottawa and his surgical residency at McMaster University, located in Hamilton, Ontario.

During his virtual discussion, Dr. Rukholm explored important questions about hearing health, including, **“What are the different types of hearing loss?” “What causes hearing loss?” “What treatment options are available for hearing loss?” and “What types of hearing aids are available and what are their benefits?”**

Since 2018, The Northumberland PACE partners have been hosting free public education sessions on a broad range of health and wellness topics and have consistently drawn large groups of community members with a variety of questions and perspectives.

Lasting an hour in length, each PACE talk consists of a 30-minute talk, a 20-minute question-and-answer period with the guest speaker(s) and a short moderator summary. Recordings of previous talks, including ‘Hearing Health’ are live at www.pacetalks.com.

Accountable Care

Masking now optional across all areas of NHH–Hospital will remain a mask-friendly environment

Effective Thursday, May 9, NHH joined other health care organizations in Ontario by shifting to optional masking across the hospital, including areas of clinical and patient care. NHH will remain a mask-friendly environment and provide masks for all staff, physicians, midwives, volunteers, patients, and visitors upon request.

On the recommendation of NHH’s Infection, Prevention and Control (IPAC) team following a thorough review of relevant and empirical data, NHH has now resumed its pre-pandemic requirements for all clinical teams, which requires care providers to complete a **Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA)** to determine what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required, specifically in instances where a patient is deemed to have a infectious illness or is being cared for with additional precautions due to a communicable illness. Patients with symptoms of communicable respiratory illness may be required to wear a mask within the hospital.

What is a Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA)?

A PCRA is a necessary assessment that is completed prior to any patient encounter and guides the appropriate selection and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). When interacting with a patient, a care provider will conduct a PCRA by considering the following:

- **The Patient** - Any additional precautions already in place; the patient's current symptoms; the patient's ability to perform hand hygiene or respiratory etiquette.
- **The Task** - The type of tasks to be carried out to support patient care; the potential for exposure to body fluids or substances; the need for any additional equipment to safely provide care.
- **The Environment** - Potential hazards that might impact safety when providing care e.g. the physical space and/or the risk to or from other individuals in shared rooms or other spaces.

"We are now at a place post-pandemic where NHH—along with many other care providers across the province—feels comfortable in resuming pre-COVID masking requirements," said Dr. Jude Obomighie, IPAC Physician Lead and Ellen Douglas, Registered Nurse, Manager, Occupational Health and Infection Control, Co-Chairs of NHH IPAC. "At the beginning of COVID, we would often talk about what the future would hold, and we believe this shift to an optional, mask-friendly environment is another part of defining of our new normal. We are grateful for the cooperation and conscientiousness of our healthcare teams, visitors, and patients, who committed to masking over the past four years to ensure our hospital remained safe for all."

For further questions on masks and visitor requirements, see our recently updated NHH Visiting Guidelines section of nhh.ca. Masking requirements will be subject to change or resume at any time on the recommendation of NHH's Infection Prevention and Control team (IPAC) and Public Health Ontario.

Questions? Don't hesitate to reach out to our Public Affairs department at ext. 4009.

Growth feasibility study underway – women and infant programming

Growth in the community NHH serves is evident in almost every corner. New subdivisions bring new families, and included in that growth is the expectation of a need to increase NHH's service and supports for women and infants.

Planning for the future growth of our services in this critical acute care area is underway through a formal feasibility study examining what local patients need today, and what is expected to be needed in future. Research is currently being conducted, with recommendations expected by July 2024.

NHH to present quality improvement results regarding rehabilitation intensity minutes at upcoming Central East Stroke Network Standards of Care Forum

NHH's Integrated Stroke Unit has not yet completed a full year of operation and already the early data gathered regarding the impact of this service on patient care/recovery is attracting attention from regional partners.

NHH's Rehabilitation team prepared a Quality Improvement submission for consideration at the Central East Stroke Network's 2024 Stroke Standards of Care Forum—an annual event—and we were thrilled to learn last month that it has been accepted.

Entitled *A Journey to Improving Rehabilitation Intensity (RI) Minutes for Stroke*, the submission will be delivered by members of our team on June 18th, 2024, and will spotlight the progress NHH has been able to make at increasing the total number of rehabilitation minutes delivered to stroke patients, a key factor in functional recovery and meaningful outcomes post stroke.

Quality indicators demonstrating the new Integrated Stroke Unit's impact against our original goals and objectives continue to be gathered and we look forward to further reporting in our Annual Report and on completion of 12 months of data collection later this summer!

Responsive and healthy work environment

NHH celebrates National Nursing Week 2024

From May 6-12, NHH celebrated National Nursing Week 2024 and the contributions of nurses as part of our interprofessional team.

For the second year in a row, NHH held its second annual Nursing Awards Ceremony on May 8, which highlighted excellence in nursing practice across NHH.

A peer-nominated recognition, the Nursing Practice Awards celebrate nurses who embody NHH's core values: integrity, quality, respect, collaboration, and compassion in their practice. We also recognized nurses for continuing education and professional development, acknowledging nurses who have achieved an academic or professional credential during the past year.

During Nursing Week 2024, NHH also hosted a variety of fun activities, including a (Bring Your) Lunch and Learn, an ice cream and sundae bar, a unit scrub colour challenge, a 'Spin to Win' prize wheel, free cinnamon buns courtesy of the Physicians' Association, and mini donuts thanks to the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO).

The Nursing Week Planning Committee was also pleased to announce that the Emergency Department has won the Unit Scrub Colour Challenge! To see their winning look, including all other entries, check out the May 2024 edition of the Hills Hub, due out at the end of the month.

Staff, physicians, midwives, and volunteers received many delicious treats throughout the week thanks to the generosity of local community businesses.

We are grateful and offer our sincere thanks to NHH's Nursing Week Planning Committee, who once again helped make this year's celebrations a success.

Largest ever Long Service Award ceremony!

NHH's annual Long Service Awards Ceremony was held at the Best Western Plus Cobourg on Wednesday, May 29.

Jennifer Gillard, NHH's VP, Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, served as the evening's Master of Ceremonies with Elizabeth Selby, Board Chair, bringing opening remarks and a territorial acknowledgement and President and CEO Susan Walsh providing the closing messages.

As is the tradition, each recipient was presented their award by their direct manager, who shared with attendees special stories about each individual and their unique contribution to the hospital through the years.

Pins and flowers were presented to individuals marking 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 45 years of service to NHH.

This year's ceremony was special because it not only took place in the hospital's 20th anniversary year, but also celebrated 34 individuals for completing 20 years of service. These dedicated individuals have been with NHH since our doors opened in 2003 and truly helped lay the foundation for who we are as an organization.

In total over 94 long-service award recipients—both staff and physicians—were recognized this year, representing the largest ever long-service award recipient list and a remarkable 1,745 years of service being celebrated.

Group photos were taken. Watch for these and more updates on NHH's growth and progress in the past fiscal year in the upcoming Annual Report to the Community scheduled for publication June 26th!

Warm congratulations to all NHH's 2024 long-service award recipients! Thank you for your service.

NHH EDIAC celebrates Indigenous History Month and Pride Month

NHH's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (EDIAC) is welcoming the month of June with several exciting initiatives to celebrate Pride Month.

Pride Month will be kicked off for NHH on Friday, May 31 at 1:00 PM with the raising of the Progress Pride flag at 1:00 PM outside of the hospital's main entrance. All are welcome to attend and participate in a group photo that will be shared across NHH's communication channels.

In addition to the flag raising, NHH's existing Pride crosswalk was given a paint refresh on May 29. Indoor murals celebrating Pride Month and Indigenous History Month—also in June—were also recently installed in the windows across the hospital's Main Street Bistro.

On June 20 from 12:00 PM-1:00 PM, all staff, physicians, midwives, and volunteers are also invited to attend NHH EDIAC's Pride Fireside Chat: **Allyship in Action: Building Bridges and Creating Allies.**

Hosted in the Peter B. & Mary T. Smith Community Education Centre (2F28), second floor of NHH, this free event will include lunch for those in attendance. Virtual options are also available with login information being emailed out closer to the date.

Additional Pride-related activities happening at NHH in June include Rainbow-themed dress days every Friday, Pride-themed treats, and the sharing of information about other local Pride events across Northumberland County.

Exceptional care, every time, for every person

Patient Experience Week 2024 celebrated!

On May 3, we wrapped up Patient Experience Week 2024 with highlights from a wonderful week of info-sharing and reflection here at NHH.

Sincere thanks to our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) for standing up an impressive Information Booth and Kindness Cart, and engaging with staff, physicians, midwives, volunteers, and students through the week, in addition to many patients and families.

With help from our Health Records team our PFAC demonstrated NHH's Patient Portal, MyChart, promoted the many ways we measure and monitor patient and caregiver experience at NHH and collected direct feedback from all for a Patient Experience Week window highlighting how we each have a role to play in a positive patient experience. Also shared with staff and visitors was a preview of our new NHH Experience Framework.

A highlight was a visit on May 2 from Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones, who spoke positively about the critical role of PFACs throughout our health care system.

Patient Experience Week is an annual event recognizing and celebrating the many opportunities healthcare staff, physicians, midwives, and volunteers have to impact patient (and family) experience every day. Planning for NHH's 2025 activities are already under way!

Do you want to make a difference in hospital care? Consider becoming a member of our growing Patient and Family Advisory Council

Have you or your loved ones received care from Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) in the past three years? Do you have an interest in bringing your lived experience of care to future hospital decision-making in a manner that reflects NHH's core values of integrity, quality, respect, compassion and teamwork? The Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) has a number of volunteer opportunities you may want to consider!

Established at NHH in December 2016, this Council is now in its ninth year. Through the PFAC, patient and caregiver partners are actively engaged in all core patient care areas of the hospital, working as partners with NHH staff, managers, physicians, midwives and community partners on a wide variety of local and regional hospital activities, special projects and program-focused quality and practice committees with one aim: to make the hospital experience as good as it can be.

“We have an extremely committed PFAC team here at NHH, and—like the hospital itself—our PFAC is growing,” said Jennifer Gillard, Vice President, Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, in a recent media release. “NHH is expanding the number of PFAC partners to increase the diversity of voices enhancing the delivery (and experience) of care and caregiving, and the areas of the hospital in which patient and caregiver partners are engaged. We’ve been very intentional about our growth, moving in stages, and sustaining our founding practice of matching each PFAC partner with a ‘buddy’ from our care team. This summer, we are very excited to expand PFAC into areas that have not yet had patient/caregiver representation, including Laboratory Services and Pharmacy, as well as Food Services.”

In total, NHH has opportunities for PFAC partners in the following areas of the hospital:

- Surgical Services
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Laboratory Services
- Pharmacy
- Food Services

Time commitment

The full Council meets as a group for bi-monthly meetings, lasting two hours, six times per year. In addition to attending bi-monthly meetings, PFAC partners also participate—based on their experience, interest and schedules—on the specific committee and/or project to which they are assigned, requiring additional background reading and meetings ranging between 6-9 times a year. Meeting times vary according to area of service. Most are held in the daytime or early evening and are currently occurring in a mix of in-person and virtual settings. In-person attendance is encouraged where possible.

How to express interest

Residents of west Northumberland with an interest in volunteering on NHH's PFAC are invited to review the Terms of Reference and Role Description and complete the Expression of Interest Form. All documents will be found on the Patient and Family Advisory Council page under the Patients tab of the hospital website at nhh.ca. These documents are available in alternate formats on request. Successful candidates will be expected to complete the necessary confidentiality, vaccination and police checks prior to commencing volunteer activities.

Interest in NHH's PFAC is invited at any time, for any program area, though the PFAC aims to fill the above priority opportunities by late August 2024.