



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS
HOSPITAL



NORTHUMBERLAND
COMMUNITY
COUNSELLING CENTRE

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW WALK-IN COUNSELLING OPTION NOW BEING PILOTED IN NORTHUMBERLAND, NO REFERRAL REQUIRED

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, October 26, 2017—NHH is making some changes to its current counselling program to increase real-time access to counselling in our community.

Working with **Northumberland Community Counselling Centre (NCCC)**, a new walk-in counselling option is now available locally to individuals 16 years of age and older, at NHH's Community Mental Health offices location at 1011 Elgin Street West, Suite 200, Cobourg.

For the duration of the pilot, the walk-in counselling option will be available two days a week, as follows: on Tuesdays (8 AM to 4 PM) and Thursdays (10 AM – 6 PM).

Individuals seeking the walk-in option will not require a referral. Seen on a first-come, first-served basis, walk-in clients will meet first with an NHH case manager who will assess them for appropriateness for walk-in support. Once confirmed as appropriate for the walk-in support, clients will receive a same day appointment with a therapist. If crisis and/or hospital support is found to be required, or if additional referrals are needed, this will be coordinated.

Should the individual be found to better fit the mandate for the Northumberland Community Counselling Centre, NHH will establish the necessary contact with that team, again for a same-day appointment, and coordinate transportation to the appropriate NCCC office, if needed.

In the event that need exceeds available staff, individuals will be asked to return on the next day of service for assistance.

There is no limit to the number of times an individual may access the new walk-in counselling clinic. NHH will continue to offer long-term counselling and group support, and previously established services will also continue unchanged at NCCC.

Adjustments will be made to the new walk-in model as required following a preliminary assessment.

“By working together in this way, the aim of both our teams is to better meet the need for real-time counselling support in Northumberland,” said Scott Pepin, Community Mental Health Director for NHH. “That need has increased steadily in recent years, and wait lists for counselling at NHH were becoming significant. Research tells us, however, that motivation to address the challenges causing stress is typically highest in the moment help is sought. If we can help our clients better seize that motivation, we believe that we can help individuals address the challenges within their control before they spiral into larger problems.”

Another benefit is anticipated with the walk-in approach. “The walk-in model may reduce the bias often associated with mental illness,” said Janet Irvine, Executive Director, NCCC. “Individuals who may have been reluctant to speak with their doctor about a ‘mental illness’—or perhaps, simply couldn’t find the time to organize this in their busy days—may be more comfortable popping in to a walk-in setting for an in-the-moment conversation about a challenge they are facing.”

The new pilot project demonstrates progress against a key priority within NHH’s [four-year Strategic Plan](#): the commitment to ‘Advance mental health supports within our community.’ Likewise, within the Central East Local Health Integration Network, the new walk-in option is expected to support the patient-centred aim for mental health in the Network’s [2016-2019 Integrated Health Services Plan](#): ‘Continuing to support people to achieve an optimal level of mental health and live healthier at home by spending 15,000 fewer days in hospital and reducing repeat unscheduled emergency department visits for reasons of mental health or addictions by 13% by 2019.’

For more information on the new walk-in option, or to coordinate an interview with representatives from the teams involved, please contact: Jennifer Gillard, jgillard@nhh.ca or 905-377-7757.

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 more than 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 Northumberland Community Counselling Centre – The Northumberland Community Counselling Centre is a family services agency that delivers a range of services addressing mental health needs within Northumberland County. Supported by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, it delivers family violence counselling, including child witness programs, as a Violence Against Women (VAW) agency; it addresses child abuse issues, supported by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and, it provides Partner Abuse Response (PAR) court-mandated programs for men and women, supported by the Ministry of the Attorney General. From a community counselling perspective, NCCC provides client-focused, solution-based, brief and longer-term structured psychotherapeutic counselling and information/education, support, advocacy and preventative programs and services to assist individuals, couples, families, workplaces and communities in Northumberland County. Community counselling services provided by NCCC rely on funding/donations from several sources, primarily from Northumberland United Way. For more information, please visit www.northumberlandccc.com or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NorthumberlandCCC.

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