



# NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

## **NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Implementation of budget plan under way at NHH – Diabetes clinic and outpatient rehabilitation service set to close April 30**

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, April 29, 2010** – Northumberland Hills Hospital is moving forward with the implementation of its 2010/11 budget and service plan following the Central East Local Health Integration Network's approval on March 16.

The first service changes related to the budget plans will take effect this week. Friday, April 30th will mark the last day of official operation of the Diabetes Complication Prevention Strategy Program (Diabetes Clinic) and the Outpatient Rehabilitation service.

To assist patients with the change in service providers, and facilitate a smooth transition in care, correspondence regarding the closures has been sent by NHH to active patients and area physicians.

In the case of the Diabetes Clinic, these letters announced the closure and recommended that the patient schedule an appointment with their family physician to discuss alternative service providers to support their ongoing diabetes care and management. In addition, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care issued correspondence of its own to local physicians providing information on alternative service providers for diabetes education.

Similarly, guidance has been sent directly to active patients of NHH's Outpatient Rehabilitation service in advance of the April 30 closure. This included letters to current patients and referring physicians/surgeons advising of the closure and that continued outpatient rehabilitation services can be obtained after April 30 through any of the private physiotherapy clinics that are available in the region. Patients have been advised to consult with their family physician for help in selecting an appropriate alternate service.

Outpatient rehabilitation patients with current active treatment plans will continue to be seen at NHH past the April 30<sup>th</sup> closure date, until their treatment plans are completed. Referrals to the NHH service were stopped as of March 8, to facilitate the wind-down.

A further component also moving forward under NHH's budget plan is a comprehensive Alternative Level of Care (ALC) strategy. ALC patients are those who have completed their acute care treatment, but remain in hospital waiting for placement in community-based services. Through CE LHIN initiatives aimed at supporting seniors and reducing emergency department wait times, NHH and the CE LHIN are implementing plans to reduce the number of ALC patients at NHH.

NHH continues to monitor the CE LHIN's progress on its commitment to put additional long-term care and convalescent care beds in our community. A call for proposals for interim long-term care beds has been posted on the CE LHIN website at [www.centraleasthin.on.ca](http://www.centraleasthin.on.ca). NHH's ALC plan will be readdressed in the event that the LHIN is not able to meet its commitment. Further details will follow as they become available in the coming months.

"Understandably, interest in the changes under way at NHH is high," noted Robert Biron, President and CEO, at the April 29 Board meeting at which the implementation progress report was presented. "We are committed to our plan, and we welcomed the recognition NHH received earlier this week in the Ontario Legislature when the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care commended our Hospital on the detailed community engagement program we used to tackle the systemic challenges of rising health costs. In addition to the Citizens Advisory Panel to which Minister Matthews referred, NHH has taken further steps in recent weeks to listen to the concerns of local citizens, and receive suggestions."

On March 31 the Hospital extended invitations to approximately 40 local residents to attend a special roundtable meeting with the Hospital Board. The invitations were sent to those residents who had expressed written concerns to the Central East LHIN regarding the NHH service changes. Twenty-one citizens attended the April 19 meeting, including representatives from both the Northumberland Health Coalition and the Citizens for Alternative Solutions.

A summary of the concerns and opportunities identified by those who attended the April 19 session was distributed at the April 29 Board meeting. Noting that there were no substantive suggestions that would change the approved plan, Biron confirmed that NHH will review the input and respond to the participants of the roundtable meeting in the coming month.

"We thank all the local residents who have participated in the discussions regarding service prioritization at NHH in the past year. The discussions—together with the recent findings of the Peterborough Regional Health Centre peer review—have further reinforced our position that NHH is on the right track, working in partnership with local residents, the Central East LHIN and community health service providers, to ensure the long-term sustainability of our Hospital."

For more information, please contact Jennifer Gillard at 905-377-7757 or [jgillard@nhh.ca](mailto:jgillard@nhh.ca).

**About Northumberland Hills Hospital** – The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto. The acute care hospital delivers a broad range of services, including emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, complex/long-term care, rehabilitation, palliative care and obstetrical care. A variety of ambulatory care clinics are also offered at NHH. In addition to these, NHH also sponsors a Community Mental Health Centre and an Assertive Community Treatment Team. 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 close to 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East LHIN. For more information, please visit [www.nhh.ca](http://www.nhh.ca).