



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

### **Cervical cancer – Screen for life! *Colposcopy service at NHH provides opportunity for life-saving diagnosis/treatment, close to home***

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014** – This year, cervical cancer will be found in about 1,500 women in Canada. At least one Canadian woman will die each day from this disease.

Ontario's Cervical Screening Program—through Cancer Care Ontario and its related Screen for Life initiative—has launched a major campaign aimed at reminding women to protect themselves from cervical cancer by having regular Pap tests. Personalized letters explaining the benefits of cervical screening, and current best practices, are being distributed to local households now.

The Pap test is a simple screening test performed by a doctor or nurse practitioner. It looks for early warning signs of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer can most often be prevented with regular screening.

#### *Who should have a Pap test?*

Regular Pap tests should be part of a woman's regular health check-up from the age of 21 if she has ever had any sexual skin-to-skin contact. If results are normal, she should repeat this screening test every three years. Pap tests can usually stop after the age of 70, assuming there have been at least three normal tests in the prior 10 years. The risk of cervical cancer does not decrease with age.

#### *What happens if a Pap test result is abnormal?*

In the event that a Pap test comes back abnormal, it does not mean that one has cervical cancer. A repeat Pap test may be ordered or, in some cases, a special test, called a **colposcopy**, may be required.

#### *Services available at NHH*

Colposcopies are one of many medical services offered locally through Northumberland Hills Hospital's Outpatient Ambulatory Care Clinic. Approximately 150 colposcopies were performed in 2013/14.

"A colposcopy is a diagnostic procedure that allows a magnified view of the cervix and surrounding tissue," explains Dr. Asiya Hameed, who performs the procedures at NHH.

“Pre-cancerous cells have certain characteristics we can detect through examination. Thanks to this technology, and the equipment we have here at NHH, biopsies can be performed, on an outpatient basis, for further examination.”

The main goal of a colposcopy is to detect pre-cancerous cells so that they can be treated before cancer has an opportunity to develop.

“I cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of regular screening,” said Dr. Hameed. “Protect your health. The earlier a problem is detected, the greater the likelihood of a positive outcome.”

Call your family doctor or nurse practitioner to book your Pap test appointment. If you do not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner, Ontario’s Health Care Connect program can help you find one. Call 1-800-445-1822 or visit [www.ontario.ca/healthcareconnect](http://www.ontario.ca/healthcareconnect).

For more information, or to schedule an interview, contact:

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**About NHH** – 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, and obstetrical care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care, rehabilitation and palliative care. 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](http://www.nhh.ca) or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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