

**NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**County and NHH partner to address issue of hoarding**  
*Pilot project focuses on helping people stay at home*

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, March 17, 2014** – Northumberland County and Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) are partnering on a new initiative to deliver housing supports to people facing mental health challenges. The Housing Support Worker initiative is a one-year pilot project in which a new full-time resource will join NHH's Community Mental Health Services program as part of the Housing Support team, dedicated specifically to addressing the issue of hoarding.

"The focus of our 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan is on 'tenancy preservation' - ensuring systems and services are in place to help people stay in their own homes," stated Northumberland County Director of Community and Social Services Mark Darroch. "In consultation with our community partners on ways to deliver this Plan, we identified that a service gap existed with respect to hoarding. While it takes many forms, hoarding is a chronic mental illness that not only affects the individual but his or her family and surrounding community. This initiative is an opportunity to expand beyond our traditional housing sector relationships to include vital healthcare sector stakeholders in efforts to achieve the goal of tenancy preservation."

"This initiative addresses a real need within our community," added Scott Pepin, NHH Director of Community Mental Health. "When residents with hoarding behaviours are facing obligations from the fire department or landlords to declutter, they can require significant support in order to make progress; eviction is often a possibility. Until now, the Housing Support team has not had the resources to offer in-home supports focused on helping people resolve such challenges. The bottom line is that this will help people to stay in their homes."

The pilot project is anticipated to launch in April. In addition to providing one-on-one support to at-risk households, key outcomes will include quantifying costs to stabilize such households, identifying gaps in existing services, and determining best practices for addressing hoarding through enhanced collaboration with community partners. The County will provide funding for the new role through the 'Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative' while NHH's Community Mental Health program will provide expertise.

This local project is right in step with the "community first" aim driving the Central East Local Health Integration Network's regional mental health and addictions strategy. One of the Strategic Aims of the LHIN's 2013-2016 Integrated Health Services Plan is to "Strengthen the system of supports for people with Mental Health and Addictions issues so they spend 15,000 more days at home in their communities by 2016."

“We need these types of innovative partnerships to address this very complex issue,” stated Deborah Hammons, CEO, Central East LHIN. “Hoarding has emerged as a major concern in our LHIN that requires a thoughtful and coordinated response. I am pleased to see that NHH is partnering with the County to ensure that these very vulnerable people receive the support they require in order to safely remain in their homes.”

More information about Northumberland County’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan is available at [www.northumberlandcounty.ca/HHP](http://www.northumberlandcounty.ca/HHP).

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**About Northumberland County** – Located an hour east of Toronto, [Northumberland County](http://www.northumberlandcounty.ca) is a thriving community strategically positioned along Highway 401 with access to both Toronto and eastern Ontario. As the upper tier of municipal government for the region, the County weaves together seven diverse yet complementary municipalities. Northumberland County Council is comprised of the Mayors of each of these seven member municipalities, representing:

- Township of Alnwick/Haldimand
- Municipality of Brighton
- Town of Cobourg
- Township of Cramahe
- Township of Hamilton
- Municipality of Port Hope
- Municipality of Trent Hills

**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).