



**NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS
HOSPITAL**



Ontario Shores
Centre for Mental Health Sciences

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mental health services enhanced through regional collaboration

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, May 27, 2010 – Patients, family members and staff involved with Northumberland Hills Hospital’s community-based Mental Health Program are benefiting from an exciting new regional collaboration with Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Ontario Shores). Approved in late April 2010 by the Board of the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN), the collaboration—considered a “voluntary integration” by the LHIN—began to take shape over the past year as the organizations explored new ways to improve mental health services in the west Northumberland region.

While still in its early days, the collaboration between NHH and Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Ontario Shores) has had a measurable impact on the quality of mental health care in the area.

“From our patients’ perspective, NHH’s relationship with Ontario Shores has improved access to specialized mental health services and decreased fragmentation of care,” notes Helen Brenner, NHH’s Vice President of Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive.

“From an organizational perspective the benefits have also been very noticeable,” she adds. “We’ve gained ready access to best practices, increased satisfaction and retention of staff and increased clinical accountability without increasing cost. This arrangement has dramatically enhanced the quality and the sustainability of mental health services for our community.”

Specific examples of the improvements already implemented within NHH’s Mental Health Program include:

- a redesign of the intake process within the NHH Mental Health Program that has already increased client access to mental health services, on average, by 53.6% (see detail below);
- new access for NHH staff and physicians to specialized mental health and psychiatric consultation at Ontario Shores in the areas of adolescents, forensics and dual diagnosis;
- enhanced use of the Ontario Telemedicine Network video technology to connect patients and clinicians between remote sites;
- new training for NHH staff in safety management provided by Ontario Shores; and

- a new crisis intervention model designed and implemented in NHH's Emergency Department.

NHH's Mental Health Program enhancements are even more evident from the perspective of the year-over-year results of the individual services offered. Below is a snapshot of NHH services over the last two fiscal years.

Direct Service	Counselling & Treatment	Case Management	Crisis	Early Psychosis Intervention	Assertive Community Treatment Team	Supportive Housing
2008/2009	6,847	374	279	815	8,861	1,515
2009/2010	12,477	1,562	376	1,130	11,105	2,066
% increase	+82.2%	+317.6%	+34.7%	+38.6%	+25.3%	+36.4%

Using an integrated program management model, Ontario Shores provides the management leadership of the Mental Health Program at NHH while staff and operating funding remain with NHH.

“Positive feedback from patients, family members and community partners, such as the local police, continues to demonstrate that this is a win-win for all,” adds Helen Brenner.

“This collaboration is a true testament to what we can accomplish as mental health care providers when we work together to strengthen programs, services and access to care,” says Sheila Neuburger, Vice-President, Clinical Services at Ontario Shores. “We look forward to building on our partnership with NHH to improve care for individuals affected by a mental illness, develop future innovations in care delivery and advance the mental health care system for our communities.”

“This innovative partnership between Northumberland Hills Hospital and Ontario Shores clearly shows how health service providers are working together to enhance care for their patients,” said James Meloche, Senior Director, System Design and Implementation at the Central East LHIN. “In 2009 the LHIN worked with hospitals to develop a Clinical Services Plan that outlined recommendations on how to improve access and quality of hospital services such as mental health. As a result of that Plan, all hospitals providing mental health services assumed the collective responsibility for patients in the Central East LHIN requiring mental health services. Partners agreed to work together to ensure that this care will be provided in the first instance locally, and where not possible, to programs either inside or outside the region. This partnership is a fine example of two organizations working together to meet that collective responsibility to provide access for mental health clients in Northumberland region.”

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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.

About Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences – Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Ontario Shores) is a leader in mental health care, providing a spectrum of specialized assessment and treatment services for people living with complex mental illness. Patients benefit from a recovery-oriented environment of care, built on compassion, inspiration and hope. Ontario Shores engages in research, education and advocacy initiatives to advance the mental health care system.