



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NHH delivers progress report on Hospital Improvement Plan at community information meetings in Port Hope, Cobourg

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, June 13th, 2016—Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) held information meetings last week in Port Hope and Cobourg to update the community on Hospital Improvement Plan (HIP) progress and answer questions. The multi-year HIP was approved by the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) in [January, 2016](#).

Approximately 30 local residents attended the two sessions combined, held in Port Hope at 7 PM on Thursday, June 9th and in Cobourg at 2:00 PM on Friday, June 10th. Hospital staff, Board members and local media were also present.

The sessions opened with remarks from NHH Board Chair Jack Russell, who provided context on the HIP, and the operating budget challenges that led up to it.

President and CEO Linda Davis detailed progress to date against the HIP priorities for 2016/17 (year 1). “A great deal of work has been completed in just five months,” Davis confirmed, as she highlighted the initiatives already complete and those underway and expected to be complete by July.

A number of HIP initiatives were implemented almost immediately following approval of the Plan by the Central East LHIN Board.

“Most of the changes related to Board Governance and Management Reporting,” said Davis, “such as policy reviews, adjustments to management reporting, clarification of roles and responsibilities of department chiefs, for example, were done right away.”

Many of the operating efficiencies identified for year one of the Plan have also been completed, such as reducing support services management, adjusting management roles to bring more front-line capacity, modifying housekeeping frequency in the hospital’s non-clinical areas and reducing the non-labour costs within Diagnostic Imaging. As well, selected investments, namely an increase of staff hours to provide additional support for NHH’s busy Intensive Care Unit (ICU), have also been completed.

Planning for other 2016/17 initiatives has also been completed, with an aim to have the changes in place by July. Examples Davis provided of these in-progress initiatives, highlighted as “yellow” on the coloured chart provided, included: steps to enhance the productivity in the NHH ED; plans to consolidate Medical/Surgical units 2A/2B on the 2nd floor into one 36-bed unit on the 2B side; and plans to combine staffing of Restorative and Palliative care units on the 1st floor.

In response to community members' recommendations at NHH's February community information sessions, that hospital staff be involved in the update, staff members Molly Court, Interim Director of 2A/2B Medicine/Surgery, and Anna-Marie Sutherland, Director of Outpatient Services, Maternal/Child Care and Surgical Services, were on hand to share details of the HIP implementation throughout the hospital and, in particular, the LEAN tools and methodologies used to develop workable, sustainable plans and the collaboration of medical and front-line teams.

Also highlighted by Davis was work done within the NHH Laboratory to improve productivity performance. In particular, Davis spoke to the hospital's decision to not implement one Laboratory-related proposal from the External Operational Review—the introduction of Point of Care (POC) testing on night shifts—when the feasibility study completed by NHH staff found implementation would in fact increase current NHH costs, rather than reduce them, with a possible risk to quality care.

To help offset this change in direction, Davis said the team has successfully worked with regional partner Peterborough Regional Health Centre and, with the approval of both hospital and LHIN boards', moved savings forward through an earlier than anticipated voluntary integration of microbiology services that will, effective October 2016, see NHH's microbiology services performed at PRHC just as pathology and cytology services are performed today, with no impact to local patients.

In total, Davis concluded, NHH is on track to realize \$1,315,500 in savings in fiscal year 2016/17 (year 1) as a result of HIP initiatives, against \$1,351,000 identified in the HIP. It is anticipated that the difference will be found in future years.

Concluding the presentations, Jack Russell spoke to the great system change underway across the province, recommending that attendees familiarize themselves with Bill 210, the Patients First Act introduced in the provincial legislature this month.

"NHH is required to do as much as we can to find the efficiencies that are doable and sustainable," Russell said, "and we are doing that without reducing services or reducing service volumes."

This is good, he said, but he cautioned that "it is still not enough. As we knew from the External Operational Review, and the Coaching Review before that, even with the targeted efficiencies and potential integration savings outlined in our HIP, NHH is not financially sustainable with the current funding. "We are in close contact with our LHIN and our MPP on this subject, and we have requested further discussion with Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to correct NHH's historical structural deficit."

Despite its financial challenges, NHH has many advantages, Russell noted, among them an exceptionally dedicated team, committed, expanding ranks of medical professionals, strong linkages with area health-care partners and a generous community. "We are grateful for all of these, and look forward to working with our funders toward a sustainable, long-term solution for NHH."

A copy of the update information provided at the information sessions June 9th and 10th is now available on the hospital's website, www.nhh.ca. For further context on NHH's multi-year Hospital Improvement Plan, see the news release published January 18th, 2016.

Media contact: Jennifer Gillard at 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 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 or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).