

NEWS RELEASE/FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hospital concludes fiscal year with small surplus while strategically investing in growth as community needs rise

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, June 25, 2025—The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) Board of Directors hosted their Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 25th. Held in person at the Peter B. & Mary T. Smith Community Education Centre on the second floor of NHH, the meeting—themed *Building Capacity. Strengthening Experience*—was chaired by **Cyndi Gilmer**, who formally completed her first year as Board Chair.

Opening remarks commenced with a land acknowledgement delivered by Hospital President and CEO, **Susan Walsh**. **Cyndi Gilmer** called the meeting to order pursuant to the By-Laws, welcoming Board Directors and Community Committee members, hospital staff and physicians, and guests.

Michael McAllister, Chair of the Board's Finance and Audit Committee, presented the NHH Financial Statements for the year ended March 31st, 2025.

McAllister reported that NHH concluded the fiscal year on March 31, 2025, with a modest surplus of \$0.8 million, compared to a forecasted deficit.

“Like all hospitals in this province, NHH faced significant financial pressures to support operations, including volume and acuity pressures, increased labour costs, funding rates below inflationary increases and ancillary costs, such as necessary Clinical Information System/technology upgrades,” said **McAllister**. “Internal efficiencies achieved through meticulous performance improvement; disciplined cost management and operational optimization led to a positive financial position at the end of our 2024-25 fiscal year.”

Following **Michael McAllister's** update, **Anoop Michael**, representing NHH's auditor KPMG, presented a positive Auditor's Report and the audited financial statements were accepted.

The Board Chair's report followed as **Cyndi Gilmer** expressed her gratitude towards the excellent volume of work that NHH continues to do, guided by the core pillars of the hospital's [Strategic Plan](#). She also praised the organization's unwavering compassion and dedication to NHH's Shared Purpose, ‘*People First*,’ which remains evident despite capacity pressures.

In addition to her written message, which will be found on page 1 in the [2024-2025 Annual Report to the Community](#), **Gilmer** spoke to key areas of growth within NHH that will support the needs of our community, saying: “Expansion is already

underway: construction of a fourth operating room, replacement of critical diagnostic imaging equipment and infrastructure enhancements in Pharmacy and Medical Device Reprocessing. In order to meet the needs of our community, we have embarked upon a Master planning process. Combined, these near-term and longer-term projects will ensure we have a hospital in future that will continue to meet the needs of the residents we exist to serve.”

Gilmer noted that the NHH Board is also experiencing growth, welcoming two new community members, **Alexandra Wright** and **Bill Oliver**, who were recruited through the Board’s latest Virtual Open House held in March 2025. She also took an opportunity to thank outgoing Board member, **Randall Freeborn**, who served on the NHH Board since 2023 as a Community member and a Board Director, saying, “We have appreciated Randall’s knowledge and contributions, most particularly his organized way of thinking that has helped us clarify processes.”

During her remarks, **Gilmer** also recognized **Dr. Mukesh Bhargava**, who is concluding his final term as Chief of Staff after an eight-year tenure, saying “Dr. Bhargava has brought his calm demeanour, professional approach and visionary thinking to many Board discussions and he will be greatly missed.”

Rhonda Cunningham, CEO of the NHH Foundation, was in attendance to present **Dr. Bhargava** with a Gift of Gratitude for his service.

In addition to recognizing **Dr. Bhargava**, **Gilmer** also formally announced **Dr. Pavel (Paul) Ketov** as NHH’s incoming Chief of Staff, effective July 1, sharing, “Dr. Ketov brings his expertise and experience as the Department Chief of the NHH Emergency Department. Through this and his work as General Medical Staff Association President, he has strong relationships with NHH medical colleagues.”

Selena Forsyth, who is completing her three-year term as President of the NHH Auxiliary, was also celebrated.

When describing **Selena’s** service to NHH, **Gilmer** shared, “Collectively, Selena has served a remarkable 23 years with the NHH Auxiliary. The commitment, passion, and wisdom that she brings to NHH is unparalleled.”

Rick Riley, who is currently serving as Vice President of the NHH Auxiliary will assume the role of Auxiliary President at that Board’s Annual Meeting in July 2025.

Gavin Ivory concluded his term on the NHH Board as he transitions from the role of Chair to Past Chair of the NHH Foundation.

“Gavin joined the NHH Foundation Board in 2016, first on the Finance Committee and then in the role of Treasurer, before becoming Chair,” said **Gilmer**. “Gavin, you have distinguished yourself for serving as Chair during the largest capital equipment campaign in County history. Your expertise in finance and asset management and your strong leadership from a governance perspective have left a very positive mark on this hospital and this community.”

Carrie Lowe was welcomed to the Board table as the new Foundation Board Chair.

Other notable updates included **Dr. Marcus Cunningham** being welcomed to the Board table for the first time after being appointed as incoming Vice President of NHH's General Medical Staff Association (GMSA). This role was previously held by **Dr. Kate Everdell**, who will now move into the role of GMSA President.

"We thank you both for your service and commitment to NHH, in your capacity as credentialed staff and members of our Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), and also for your very critical work as General Practitioners in the community. The fact that you make time from your busy practices to also support NHH is noted and much appreciated," said **Cyndi Gilmer**.

Gilmer closed her report by thanking **Susan Thivierge**, Executive Assistant, **Susan Walsh**, President and CEO, Chief of Staff **Dr. Mukesh Bhargava**, and the NHH Senior Leadership Team for their support during her first year as Board Chair.

She also expressed thanks to the entire NHH community, which includes hospital teams, volunteer partners, and her peers on the Board, stating, "Thank you to our dedicated staff, physicians, and midwives who live our Shared Purpose *"People First"* every day. Thank you to the Board Directors and Community Members for their continued dedication and commitment to local hospital governance. Finally, I want to recognize the work of our amazing volunteer partners across the hospital- the NHH Foundation, the NHH Auxiliary, and the Patient Family Advisory Council, whose work is highlighted in our Annual Report."

Following her address, **Gilmer** introduced **Susan Walsh**, President and CEO, to deliver personal remarks.

Walsh began by expressing her gratitude for the many hospital teams and volunteers who regularly uphold the *'People First'* culture that has become synonymous with NHH, saying, "Despite many uncertainties, our hospital teams remained steadfast in upholding NHH's Shared Purpose, *'People First,'* in the care that we deliver. A defining part of NHH's identity has—and will always be—the people. Our hospital has grown into an organization where individuals choose to begin their healthcare journey—and in many instances—remain here for their entire careers. Every member of our hospital team—including volunteer partners—has shaped NHH into a place where clinical excellence, compassion, and care exist cohesively."

Walsh also spoke to many highlights published in the [2024-2025 Annual Report to the Community](#) that illustrated the hospital's growth agenda to support community needs, stating: "Similarly to last year, we continue to see our service volumes trending upwards in the areas of Emergency Department visits, total admissions—including Acute & Post-Acute—total number of surgical cases, and beyond."

A key point that **Walsh** touched on was the increasing need for primary care in west Northumberland County, and underscored the collaborative work being done with community partners to support physician recruitment.

“Recent data also reinforced the increasing need for primary care in our community. In the last fiscal year, we saw 2,475 (11%) unique patients that presented at NHH’s Emergency Department with no family physician for a 21.9% increase year-over-year,” said **Walsh**. “While the absence of primary care has been an ongoing challenge that is not unique to west Northumberland County, I am grateful for the collaborative work and recruitment efforts being driven by NHH and area partners. I also want to salute those primary care providers who are carrying an exceptional workload. While not large enough to meet demand, we have a wonderful community of primary care providers, and we must do all in our power to recruit and retain to support this community’s needs.”

Walsh concluded her address by touching on the importance between building capacity and strengthening experience—the theme of NHH’s 2024-2025 Annual Report and Meeting—stating, “In our pursuit of these goals, it’s important to remember that expansion and enhancement are not only about scale, but also the quality of care being delivered. The relationship between growing capacity and strengthening experience is symbiotic; one cannot exist successfully without the other. Looking to the future, I am invigorated by what we have accomplished together, and for the potential of tomorrow.”

Led by **Kendra Simmons**, Chair of NHH’s Nominating Committee, the Board endorsed the Committee’s recommendation that **Cindy Gervais** be elected for a three-year term.

Finally, three re-appointments of ex officio Board members were approved, all for one-year terms:

- **Dr. Paul Ketov**, Chief of Staff
- **Susan Walsh**, President and CEO
- **Kate Zimmerman**, Vice President, Integrated Care and Chief Nursing Executive

Jennifer Gillard, Vice President, Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships was invited to present the Experience Partner Award for Exceptional Service. The **Award** recognizes an individual Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) partner who has demonstrated exemplary volunteer service and contribution to enhancing the care experience at NHH.

The recipient of the 2025 Experience Partner Award for Exceptional Service was **Liane Covert** of Port Hope.

A member of NHH’s PFAC since 2022, **Liane** is trained as a Personal Support Worker (PSW) and has experience supporting individuals with developmental disabilities.

Liane’s interest in serving on NHH’s Patient Family Advisory Council (PFAC) is inspired by her desire to destigmatize myths and misconceptions surrounding mental illness and addictions.

In her PFAC role, **Liane** advocates for patients seeking mental health and addiction services, while helping to enhance supports and accessibility for residents in her community.

Liane brings a unique depth and breadth of knowledge to PFAC having experienced care at NHH in the following ways: through the Emergency Department; as an admitted patient; and through outpatient services and supports.

Committed to “giving a voice to those who are overlooked or forgotten so their voice can have fair and equal representation,” **Liane** currently serves on NHH's Community Mental Health program's Quality and Practice Committee and, most recently, the Essential Care Partner Working Group - a joint initiative with the Ontario Caregivers Organization and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland.

Gillard read an excerpt from **Liane's** nomination that was submitted by **Jason Halliday**, Manager of our Community Mental Health Services, sharing, “Liane has been an exceptional experience partner. This year Liane took the lead on developing the display for Mental Health Awareness Week. Liane was not only involved in the planning, she also volunteered her time (with staff) to be there on all of the days and talk with people walking by about NHH's Mental Health services. Liane always demonstrates a collaborative approach and is definitely a team player. Liane... has been instrumental in helping to review our mental health policies and procedures [from the client/family lens] as well as updating program forms, sharing her voice to ensure that the language in the documents is client-centred and clearly presented. Liane is a hugely valuable member of our mental health team as a PFAC member.”

Cyndi Gilmer concluded the meeting with closing remarks and thanked guests for attending. A motion to terminate the meeting was accepted.

[NHH's 2024-2025 Annual Report to the Community](#) is available now on the hospital's website. Copies are available in alternate formats on request from the hospital's Public Affairs office (905-377-7757).

For more information on the NHH Board of Directors, please see the Accountability tab of nhh.ca. Information reflecting the 2025-2026 Board will be updated in the coming weeks.

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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, cancer and supportive care, dialysis and 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 67,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than 850 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](#) and LinkedIn [Northumberland Hills Hospital](#).

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