NHH
Northumberland
Hills Hospital

NEWS RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE

**COVID-19 outbreak declared on NHH's Restorative Care Unit—
Regular visiting temporarily paused in this area of the hospital**

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, December 13, 2023—A COVID-19 outbreak has been declared in Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH)'s Restorative Care Unit (1B) after six patients have tested positive.

Visiting continues as usual outside the Restorative Care Unit unless patients are in isolation for COVID-19 infection or exposure. Limited exceptions are made for COVID-19 positive patients on discussion with Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) staff and the care team including, for example, those at imminent end-of-life.

The following is a summary of the infection prevention and control measures in place at NHH to minimize risk and conclude the outbreak as soon as possible:

- **Visiting and Admission restrictions** – NHH's Restorative Care Unit is temporarily closed to all new admissions. Regular visiting is temporarily paused in this area.
- **Daily self-screening by staff for COVID-19 symptoms** – All individuals entering the hospital for work must pre-screen for symptoms and refrain from entering the building or Community Mental Health offices in the event symptoms develop.
- **Mandatory use of appropriate PPE in clinical and patient care areas** – All staff, physicians, midwives, and essential caregivers/visitors are expected to pay strict attention to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements throughout the hospital. NHH's masking policy remains in effect for all clinical and patient care areas. Visitors continue to have access to free masks at entry to the hospital and NHH's Community Mental Health offices and will be expected to keep their masks on at all times while inside clinical areas.
- **No eating or drinking is permitted by visitors in patient rooms** – This is due to the fact that masks would need to be removed.
- **Monitoring of patients considered "high risk contacts"** – Any patients identified as having a high risk of exposure have been relocated, tested, and are being cared for with appropriate precautions.
- **Mandatory vaccination of staff** – All staff and physicians are required to be up to date with their vaccines (two doses); booster vaccines continue to be distributed to further reduce the risk of infection and spread.
- **Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene practices** – Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene will continue to be reinforced.
- **Enhanced environmental cleaning** – Enhanced cleaning, with a focus on high touch surfaces and common spaces has been implemented.

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- **Proactive communication** – Public notices are continually updated across NHH's communication channels, including doorways within/leading to the hospital, to promote awareness of the presence of COVID-19 and the importance of vigilance with PPE.

Masking remains a shared responsibility to mitigate spread

Masking continues to remain in place throughout clinical and patient care areas in hospital and NHH's Community Mental Health offices. Visitors have access to free masks on entry and are expected to keep their medical-grade mask on at all times (or over top of their personal cloth mask) while inside, unless eating or drinking in designated areas. **Visitors who have recently developed COVID-19 are not permitted to visit patients for 10 full days from the date of symptom onset or from testing positive (whichever date is earliest).**

For details on NHH's Visiting Guidelines and expectations, including options and answers to other Frequently Asked Questions, please see our website. Updates on NHH's COVID-19 status will continue to be communicated through the hospital's website and related social media channels. Community outbreak information will be found on the HKPRDHU's Respiratory Diseases Dashboard, which provides a high-level assessment of local respiratory virus activity.

Media contact: Amy Seymour, Communications Officer, aseymour@nhh.ca or 905-372- 6811 ext. 4009

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 63,000 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 700 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 or Twitter @NorHillsHosp.

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