



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Enhanced COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Centre now open at NHH for patients with worsening symptoms due to COVID-19 and those with influenza-like illness and concerns

Team relocated from trailer outside NHH Emergency Department to expand and enhance Assessment services as regional need rises

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, January 13th, 2022 – The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Centre came full circle this week when it moved from the trailer outside the Emergency Department to the same space it opened in almost two years ago: the Ambulatory Care Unit immediately inside the hospital's main entrance.

With ongoing support from a multidisciplinary team of NHH staff, area primary care providers, and [Ontario Health Team of Northumberland](#) partners, the expanded **NHH COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Centre** service is now offering a mix of virtual and in-person supports in an expanded and easier-to-access one-stop-shop model.

Designed to bring additional clinical assessment services and support to a very specific patient cohort—those experiencing a worsening of symptoms from known or suspected infection with COVID-19—the enhanced Centre also continues to serve those with influenza-like symptoms and concerns and coordinates local PCR testing for those who are eligible. In future, as treatment options for COVID-19 gain Health Canada approval, the expanded Centre is also well positioned to add treatments to its list of services as well.

“NHH has been operating a COVID-19 assessment and testing site since the very early days of Wave 1,” said Susan Walsh, NHH President and CEO. “Ontario Health reached out to existing centres on December 31st with an urgent request to expand the assessment services offered,” she explained. “We quickly formed a working group and today’s announcement is the result. From a system perspective, our goal is to sustain current COVID-19 services, like testing of high-risk and vulnerable populations, while also integrating new virtual and in-person clinical supports from specially trained nurses and primary care providers to better help those with known or suspected infection with COVID-19, and conserving capacity in Emergency Departments.”

“Given what we now know about Omicron, we’re preparing for the worst and hoping for the best,” adds Dr. Erin Pepper, Assessment Centre physician lead. “While Northumberland saw lower cases of COVID-19 infections in earlier waves with previous variants, Omicron cases, unfortunately, are on the rise. People, particularly those who

are not vaccinated, and those with other complicating factors, like age or pre-existing chronic conditions, are getting sick. Without alternate resources, Emergency Departments could be overwhelmed. We hope it will not be necessary, but our enhanced service aims to take pressure off area Emergency Departments by offering a specialized, one-stop shop for those who need help with worsening COVID-19 symptoms. At the same time we want to offer additional support for those who just have questions, such as a parent of a child with influenza-like symptoms. To that end, we're offering one local number to call where we will help you or get you the COVID-related help that you need."

The staff mix within the expanded Centre is comprised of navigators, nurses and primary care providers (doctors and nurse practitioners). Accessed through the Centre's existing 1-905-377-7783 phone line, the team will provide support by phone and, as required, in person. On the recommendation of the NHH Patient and Family Advisory Council, additional phone capacity, including a toll-free dial-in, is being investigated. All callers are 'triaged' through the navigators who will pose a series of questions and direct the caller as appropriate. Virtual consults with regional specialists will also be incorporated, as required, allowing the team to 'flex up' should need arise.

Location, contact information and hours of operation

The NHH COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Centre is currently located inside the main entrance of Northumberland Hills Hospital at 1000 DePalma Drive, Cobourg in the Ambulatory Care Clinic. Hours of operation are from 8AM to 4PM. It is recommended that all patients call 905-377-7783 for assessment prior to arriving on site. Walk-in patients will be accepted. Enter via the main front entrance during the hours noted above. In all urgent situations, patients are encouraged to call 911 or go directly to the nearest Emergency Department.

Universal masking requirement and NO FOOD/DRINK

All patients accessing the Centre will be required to don a mask. Masks will be provided on entry. Food and drink will be strictly prohibited. The COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Centre wait area has been designated a 'quiet area' to minimize talking/interaction and, with it, risk of close contact. Physical distancing measures will be maintained with support from the NHH Screeners who support the hospital team at the main front entrance to the hospital/Centre.

For the latest information on COVID-19, including links to related resources, please see the COVID section on the hospital's website, nhh.ca/covid-19

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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, 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 Alwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 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. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp) or Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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