NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Medical Assistance in Dying support expanded locally through new hospital team

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, September 27, 2017—The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) Board of Directors has accepted the Medical Advisory Committee's process for the provision of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH).

MAiD describes a situation where a clinician provides or administers medication that intentionally brings about a patient's death, at the request of that patient. In order to be eligible, the patient must be a competent adult suffering from a "grievous and irremediable medical condition" that causes the person to endure intolerable suffering.

Following the Supreme Court of Canada's recognition of MAiD as a constitutional right, the Canadian Criminal Code was amended in June 2016 to exempt specific health care practitioners and others who help provide medical assistance in dying. There is now an obligation on the part of Canadian health service providers, including hospitals, to facilitate patient rights in this area.

To this point, NHH has been meeting its legal obligation to provide MAiD to eligible patients through partnership with our regional partner, the Peterborough Regional Health Centre. Patients may also access MAiD outside of the hospital setting in the local community through selected family physicians and nurse practitioners.

"Following demonstration of local and regional patient need, and confirmation of a core group of health care professionals trained and willing to provide the service, hospital-based MAiD will also be available at NHH," said Dr. Mukesh Bhargava, NHH Chief of Staff in a recent memo to staff.

"I'm pleased we'll now be able to offer this service in our local hospital, as well as in the community, to better meet the needs of our patients," said Dr. Kate Everdell, local family physician and a member of the MAiD Support Team at NHH. Dr. Everdell and Dr. Mark Essak, also a local family physician, were part of an interdisciplinary working group at NHH that developed the policies and processes for MAiD at NHH.

For background information on MAiD in Ontario please see the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care website at https://www.ontario.ca/page/medical-assistance-dying-and-end-life-decisions

Patients at NHH who have questions about MAiD are encouraged to speak with their care team.

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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 more than 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.

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