



# NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NHH ramps down non-urgent services as Omicron cases surge in Ontario

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022** – Effective Thursday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) will be temporarily postponing all non-urgent procedures, including: elective surgeries, non-urgent Diagnostic Imaging procedures and non-urgent Ambulatory Care clinic activities. The aim, as set out in an update to Directive 2 from Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health to all hospitals late Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, is to preserve health human resources (HHR) for essential services in the face of record-high COVID-19 case counts driven by the Omicron variant.

“Once again, as we were in April 2021, we are being called on to work together as a province to do all we can to preserve our system’s overall bed and human resource capacity,” said Susan Walsh, President and CEO. “We sincerely regret the impact this causes on patients and families affected by the temporary postponements but underscore that it is a necessary step to help us help those who are most in need.”

The NHH Emergency Department continues to operate as normal. The NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre, which recently [adjusted testing guidelines per provincial direction](#) to ensure focus on the most vulnerable in highest-risk settings, continues to provide service seven days/week with support from [Ontario Health Team of Northumberland](#) partners. All urgent care, including cancer care and dialysis, will continue to be provided. Mental Health programming will shift to virtual, wherever possible. There will be no impact to patients currently admitted to hospital.

NHH staff and area providers are now in the process of contacting elective/non-urgent patients and families impacted by the ramp-down. **If you do not receive a call, please assume your procedure or service will continue as planned.**

The ramp-down is expected to last until at least January 26. NHH will provide an update through its communication channels closer to that date and patients will be contacted directly when their procedures have been rescheduled.

NHH has also initiated further visitor restrictions in an effort to minimize risk from the highly infectious Omicron variant. The following are permitted at this time:

- ✓ one birth partner per NHH obstetrical patient
- ✓ family/loved ones of non-COVID-positive patients at imminent end-of-life (care team to advise)
- ✓ essential caregivers to children coming to the hospital for care (children = 18 and under)

- ✓ essential caregivers for those with cognitive impairments - outpatient settings only (Emergency Department visits, Diagnostic Imaging, etc.)

All must successfully answer the screening questions and agree to comply with any personal protective equipment requirements. COVID-positive patients continue to be limited to virtual visiting only.

“Thank you, again, for your continued support and patience as we adjust to the latest challenges of the pandemic,” said Susan Walsh. “Thank you, too, for doing all in your power to minimize your risk – get vaccinated, maintain distance from those outside your immediate household, wear a mask when you cannot and follow the latest self-isolation guidelines if you do fall ill. Every member of our team is committed to doing all in our power to provide exceptional patient care for those who need us most but it will take all of us, working together, to see this pandemic through.”

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](http://nhh.ca/covid-19)

Media contact: Jennifer Gillard, Senior Director, Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Partnerships, 905-377-7757 or [jgillard@nhh.ca](mailto:jgillard@nhh.ca).

**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 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](http://www.nhh.ca) or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp) or Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

- END -