NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS
HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two Geneticists welcomed to NHH medical team–
Referrals for Dr. Shawn Shao and Dr. Vanda McNiven now accepted

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, January 20, 2023— Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is pleased to announce the recruitment of Geneticists, Dr. Shawn Shao, MD, CM, PhD, FRCPC and Dr. Vanda McNiven, MD, MSc, FRCPC.

"The addition of two Geneticists is another example of NHH's commitment to fulfilling the aspirations of our new Strategic Plan by putting *People First* and bringing care close to home," said Susan Walsh, NHH President and CEO. "We are honoured that Dr. Shao and Dr. McNiven have chosen to share their specialized skillset and expertise with the community of west Northumberland County."

"We are excited to welcome Dr. Shawn Shao and Dr. Vanda McNiven to NHH and our community," said Dr. Mukesh Bhargava, Chief of Staff at NHH. "The recruitment of two Geneticists will provide local patients with increased access to specialized health care. In doing so, we are eliminating barriers to receiving and delivering efficient, accessible care for both patients and care providers."

Dr. Shao is a staff geneticist at North York General Hospital. He completed medical school at McGill University and residency in Medical Genetics and Genomics at the University of Toronto.

Prior to medical school and residency, Dr. Shao received his undergraduate degree in biochemistry and a PhD in pharmacology and therapeutics from McGill University. He then completed post-doctoral training in retinal neuro-vascular development at Harvard Medical School, Boston Children's Hospital.

Dr. Shao is passionate about genome guided therapeutic approaches, including pharmacogenomics.

"I am thrilled to join the Northumberland Hills Hospital team and looking forward to serving the neighborhood of west Northumberland County," said Dr. Shao. "As an increasingly recognized field at the forefront of personalized care, genetics provides diagnosis, and clinical managements from newborns to elderly populations. We hope the addition of clinical genetics and family-oriented care will further enrich the experience that patients have at NHH."

Dr. Vanda McNiven completed her medical school and residency in Medical Genetics and Genomics at the University of Toronto. She is currently a staff Geneticist in the Division of Clinical Genetics at the Hospital for Sick Children as well as a Clinical

Associate in Clinical Genetics at Mount Sinai Hospital and the University Health Network in Toronto.

Dr. McNiven is active in multiple collaborative efforts to leverage new diagnostic technologies in the diagnosis of genetic and metabolic disease.

"I am very much looking forward to joining the Northumberland Hills Hospital network and working with the community it serves as a Clinical Geneticist," said Dr. McNiven. "In the field of Genetics, we navigate in genetic rare disease. While individually rare, rare diseases are collectively common (with over 7,000 different rare genetic conditions known). Although there are currently only a few rare genetic diseases that can be cured, an accurate diagnosis can often have important implications for informing management, prognosis, and family planning."

Geneticists provide consultations to diagnose and treat genetic disorders and conditions for all ages from newborns to elderly populations.

With the support of NHH's Telemedicine Coordinator, Registered Nurse Rebecca Rutherford, Dr. McNiven, and Dr. Shao will support local primary care providers and specialists by offering virtual genetics consultations for reasons including, but not limited to, intellectual disabilities, autism, multiple congenital anomalies, and suspected genetic types of neurological, cardiovascular, endocrine, and ocular conditions.

Referring providers can complete the NHH Clinical Telemedicine Consult Request and fax to 905-373-6972. Patients will be scheduled and notified by the NHH OTN nurse.

For a list of virtual services being offered through NHH, visit: https://nhh.ca/Patients/PatientCareServices/virtual-care.

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

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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