



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrating Nurse Practitioners at Northumberland Hills Hospital

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, November 8, 2019 — The growing role of Nurse Practitioners (NPs) in the health care system in Ontario will be celebrated during NP Week from November 10-16, 2019. There are over 3,700 NPs licensed to practice in Ontario today, and eight of them are currently providing patient care at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH).

“For the general public, the full scope of the NP role might not be known before becoming a patient, but this profession is instrumental to the health care sector as a whole and, increasingly, to the delivery of care at NHH,” explains Susan Walsh, VP Patient Services Chief Nurse Executive. “NPs play a key role improving access to primary care, decreasing appointment wait-times, providing patient-centered care, and more,” she adds.

NPs are registered nurses with advanced education and training that allows them to provide primary, acute, and specialty health care in a variety of settings. This additional experience means NPs can be autonomous in providing a broad scope of services which include performing physical exams, ordering tests, diagnosing and treating illnesses, writing prescriptions, and providing referrals. They are also involved with admitting/discharging patients from hospital.

The NP role is expanding not only across the province, but at NHH, where NPs now work in both outpatient care in the Emergency Department (ED), and inpatient care in the Medical/Surgical Unit, Inpatient Rehabilitation and Restorative Care. Having NPs working in these departments fills a need for both patients and staff.

“Even though as NPs we’re autonomous in our practice, we work within a collaborative model at NHH,” explains Sheena Nelson, NP in NHH’s Rehabilitation Unit. “We have an interprofessional staff and physician team filled with experts in different roles, who we can call on when needed – it’s one of the benefits of working in the hospital environment.”

At NHH, NP efforts and programs help reduce wait-times in the ED and help to ensure admitted patients are seen more frequently by acute and primary care givers.

In the ED, NHH triages patients into two streams, allowing less critical patients to be seen in a more timely manner by an NP in the Blue Zone—where an NP is now on staff between 10:00a.m. and 10:00p.m. seven days a week—while also ensuring there is staff and space available for more critical patients to get to a stretchered location for treatment by a physician.

On the inpatient side, NPs reduce the pressure on the system and frequently monitor patients whose illnesses and injuries fall within their scope of work. By working closely with both the hospitalist team and area family physicians, the collaborative physician/NP model allows for

better patient care of a growing number of admitted patients, ensuring patients are seen frequently by a primary care provider and supported in an interdisciplinary environment.

NPs are also active beyond the direct patient care they provide at NHH, committing extra time to promote and enhance professional practice within the hospital, serve on committees, support program and policy development, and contribute to the advancement and oversight of quality care. They are also mentors for NP students, overseeing clinical placements at various times throughout the year.

In celebration of NP Week this year, information about the role of NPs will be on display in the space adjacent to the Main Street Bistro of NHH, and the Bistro itself will be decorated with messages from inpatients.

For more information on NPs in Ontario, please visit www.npao.org.

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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 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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