



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE

Three cases of COVID-19 confirmed among staff on 2B medical/surgical unit

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, December 27, 2021 – Three staff members on Northumberland Hills Hospital’s 2B medical/surgical unit have tested positive for COVID-19 resulting in the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU) declaring the unit to be in an “outbreak” status. These staff members are now at home self-isolating and we wish them all a fast and full recovery.

“Our infection prevention and control team is working closely with counterparts at the HKPRDHU, and no patient spread has been identified at this time,” said Susan Walsh, Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) President and CEO. “While the Health Unit initially declared the outbreak on both medical units (2A and 2B), on closer investigation of the cases involved we anticipate that the status will be updated to 2B shortly. We are taking every step possible to minimize opportunities for the transmission of COVID-19 inside the hospital and we thank everyone for their continued vigilance.”

As a precaution, patients and staff considered more at risk of exposure are being tested and monitored. Patients recently discharged from the 2B unit are in the process of being contacted and provided with instructions regarding self-monitoring and, as appropriate, testing.

The following control measures are in place at NHH:

- **Active daily screening of staff for COVID-19 symptoms** – All individuals entering the hospital for work are actively screened for symptoms.
- **Mandatory vaccination of staff** – All staff and physicians are required to be fully vaccinated (two doses); booster vaccines have also been broadly distributed through a series of in-hospital clinics, further reducing the risk of infection and spread.
- **Mandatory use of appropriate PPE** – All staff, physicians, midwives and essential caregivers are expected to pay strict attention to PPE requirements throughout the hospital.
- **Cohorting of patients considered “high risk contacts”** – Any patients identified as having a high risk of exposure are being co-located into the same area of the 2B unit, tested and cared for with appropriate precautions. New admissions to 2B will be evaluated on an as-required basis in consultation with Public Health.
- **Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene practices** – Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene will continue to be reinforced.

- **Enhanced environmental cleaning** – Increased cleaning of the unit and increased cleaning of equipment shared between patient rooms.
- **Proactive communication** – In addition to reaching out directly to all patients on 2B and to those recently discharged, public notices have been placed on all appropriate hospital entrances as well as to the doorways within/leading to 2B to promote awareness.

NHH remains fully operational. Visitor restrictions have been in place at NHH for some time. In light of increasing community spread, the hospital reverted to [Phase One of its COVID-19 Visitor Policy](#) on December 24 (essential caregivers only, one person per patient per day, for all but those confirmed or suspected to be positive for COVID-19). Beginning today (December 27) visitors to 2B will be temporarily restricted until the outbreak is declared over. Special exceptions for palliative patients will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Going forward, COVID-19 outbreak notifications for Northumberland Hills Hospital will be communicated through the 'Community Outbreak' area of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit website, <https://www.hkpr.on.ca/category/my-community/outbreaks/>

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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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