



## JOINT NEWS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE

### **Second positive case of COVID-19 confirmed among NHH staff, outbreak declared**

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, November 13, 2020** – A second Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) staff member has tested positive for COVID-19.

The individual was working in the hospital on Thursday night (November 5-6), Saturday night (November 7-8) and Sunday night (November 8-9) and attended the hospital briefly between the hours of approximately 4 PM and 5:30 PM on Friday, November 6. As with the first positive case, the individual is now at home on self-isolation.

As per the provincial guidance documents, this second case has prompted the [Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit](#) to declare a facility-wide outbreak at the hospital. Under province guidelines, an outbreak is to be declared at a hospital when there are two or more confirmed cases, and it is determined the exposure occurred at the facility.

“Although we have not seen many cases in our area like some areas of the province, we are starting to experience an increase,” says Dr. Lynn Noseworthy, Medical Officer of Health for the HKPR District Health Unit. “This is especially troubling, given we are moving into the holiday season and winter months when we typically see respiratory illness create burdens for our health care system and partners.”

To help combat further spread, Dr. Noseworthy urges everyone to follow the public health guidelines of wearing a mask, washing hands frequently, maintaining physical distancing and staying home if ill.

As part of the outbreak, staff from NHH are working closely with the Health Unit to ensure all outbreak control measures are implemented.

“It remains safe to attend the hospital for care as required,” said Linda Davis, President and CEO. “Our Occupational Health and Safety office is working closely with local public health colleagues and regional infectious disease experts to minimize any risk. Contact tracing is in progress for any patients, staff and physicians who may have come into contact with the individual and instructions on any actions required will be made directly by local Public Health and/or NHH Occupational Health/Infection Prevention and Control. Anyone who may have come into contact with the individual has been or will soon be notified with instructions to self-monitor for any symptoms and, as directed, self-isolate and seek testing. A small number of inpatients have been isolated as a precaution and enhanced cleaning of the areas of the hospital where the individual was working has been completed.

At a staff forum earlier today staff members and physicians were once again reminded of the importance of continuing to adhere to the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) at all time, to stay home from work if feeling ill and to seek testing as appropriate.

There are no changes to service delivery at NHH at this time, but, effectively immediately, volunteer activity within the hospital will once again be paused. Until today NHH was permitting one visitor per day per patient to all inpatients and outpatients. Effective today, the [NHH COVID-19 Visitor Policy](#) will return to essential visitors only, specifically: patients who are palliative or end-of-life; a support for a delivering mother; a parent/guardian of a child; or, a caregiver deemed essential for an individual with a specific need, at the discretion of the care team.

“Other actions, including the strict enforcement of appropriate personal protective equipment at all times, the closure of the Main Street Bistro to visitors, the stopping of self-service within the cafeteria for staff/physicians and the temporary postponement of in-person education has been initiated today, in order to make every effort to minimize non-essential person-to-person contact,” said Davis.

NHH urges everyone to help minimize the risk of the spread of COVID-19 by continuing to:

- Maintain physical distance from others outside your immediate household (6 feet or 2 metres)
- Wear a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge, not possible or required (for information on how to put on, remove and clean a non-medical face mask, [see Health Canada recommendations here](#)).
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Always wash your hands before eating or drinking, after using the washroom, if your hands become visibly dirty and before and after you put on and take off a face mask
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Download [COVID Alert](#), the made-in-Ontario app that will alert users if they may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. [Apple users may download here](#), [Android users go here](#)

NHH patients or family members with questions are encouraged to contact a member of their hospital care team directly or to reach out to the NHH Public Affairs office care of Jennifer Gillard, Senior Director, Public Affairs and Partnerships, 905-377-7757 or [jjillard@nhh.ca](mailto:jjillard@nhh.ca).

Questions to the Health Unit may be directed to Chandra Tremblay, Manager, Corporate Services: Communication and IT Services, Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, 1-866-888-4577, ext. 1212, [ctremblay@hkpr.on.ca](mailto:ctremblay@hkpr.on.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 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians 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).

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