



# NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Patient care priorities and financial challenges highlighted at Annual Meeting, By-law amendments approved**

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, June 26th, 2014**—The Annual and Special Meeting of Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) was held last Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> in the hospital Education Centre. Approximately 50 people attended the evening meeting chaired by outgoing Board Chair Doug Mann, including Board Directors, committee volunteers, hospital staff and residents interested in hospital and healthcare services in west Northumberland.

Beth Brook, Vice Chair of the Board's Finance and Audit Committee, presented the Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2014, announcing that the hospital concluded the fiscal year "with a small surplus from operations of \$14,166" on a \$65 million budget, "thus meeting our Hospital Service Accountability Agreement with the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN)."

In addition, Brook shared, "NHH received one-time Working Capital Assistance funding of \$422,900, which we welcomed but were required to use to pay down existing debt."

The fiscal year was not without its financial challenges. Like many hospitals in the Central East LHIN, NHH experienced several prolonged surges in acute care patients. This had a direct impact on wage and supply costs in excess of \$195,000. As well, both patient activity and acuity continued to rise from last year.

"Occupancy in the medical care units and intensive care unit increased by 9% and 8% respectively," said Brook, "while patient acuity increased by 9%, resulting in unavoidable increases in staffing and medical supplies."

The NHH Emergency Department was also busier as the acuity increased by 10% and admitted patients escalated by over 30%.

"Given these very significant financial challenges, senior management and the Board will be carefully monitoring our financial performance to ensure we maintain the necessary balanced budget in the 2014/15 fiscal year," concluded Brook.

The Auditors' Report was presented by KPMG LLP's Michelle Podhy; members approved the firm's re-appointment as the hospital's external auditors for fiscal year 2014/15.

Doug Mann opened his report from the Chair with a tribute to four members who concluded their service as Directors at the June 19<sup>th</sup> meeting—Beth Brook, John Farrell, Heather Sculthorpe and Dean Pepper—and highlighted the "exceptional support" provided by the NHH Foundation and the NHH Auxiliary.

"The Foundation provided \$2,430,328 in the past year alone for needed medical equipment and support for gerontological programming," said Mann. "The NHH Auxiliary provided a further

\$150,000 through their retail and other fundraising efforts, while also supporting patients and staff. We simply wouldn't be the hospital we are today without this support, and on behalf of the Board and the entire hospital team, thank you."

Reflecting on his past two years in the Chair's seat, Mann said: "Many challenges continue, such as the healthcare requirements of a community that is considerably older than the provincial average, but I believe our hospital is well positioned."

"Through the Northumberland Health System Transformation Council," Mann said, "we are moving forward with targeted integration opportunities that make sense for quality patient care and system sustainability. We are working, together with our LHIN and regional partners, to enhance our Clinical Information System, to permit improved access to timely patient information and increase cooperation between health system providers. And as a Board, we are enhancing our current methods of engagement with patients, caregivers and the broader community through projects like Northumberland PATH, thanks to support from The Change Foundation, and our own priority to update our Community Engagement Framework."

On behalf of the Board Mann thanked Helen Brenner, NHH's Vice President, Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive, for assuming the interim role of CEO for seven months of the fiscal year (April 15 to November 15, 2013) while the search for President and CEO Linda Davis was under way. He also extended the Board's appreciation to Chief of Staff Dr. David Broderick. After 10 consecutive years as Chief, Dr. Broderick recently accepted the Board's offer to renew his contract for another three-year term.

Director John Hudson took the podium following Doug Mann's remarks to thank him for his "exemplary service" over the past two years.

"Those of you who have served in the same or similar capacity will know the amount of time and personal attention the position demands," said Hudson. "Doug Mann, who has a history of service to his community over many years, gave that time and personal attention—and then some. He assumed the position at a time when hospital finances were being squeezed like never before and the pressures of patient activity and acuity seemed relentless.... Doug provided that steady hand at the wheel and calming influence that got us through some difficult stretches. Thank you for the sincere effort and dedication you exemplified so well on our behalf." Doug Mann will continue on the Board as Past Chair.

President and CEO Linda Davis reflected on her own eight months in the hospital's senior position. Recruited from Collingwood's General and Marine Hospital in November 2014, Davis has been seeing first-hand, by shadowing staff members across the hospital team in their day-to-day work, what NHH means to the community and 600 staff members alike.

"I see a hospital that is living its values," said Davis. "I have seen compassion, collaboration and integrity at work. I have witnessed the respect shown to patients and family members and care delivered with quality as a central focus.... By collaborating with our many partners, among them the Central East LHIN, we are setting NHH on a path that will sustain local, acute care for generations to come. I am very pleased and honoured to be a part of this journey."

Keynote speaker Leslee Thompson, President and CEO of Kingston General Hospital (KGH), delivered a compelling speech about what she described as the "global shift" toward patient-centred care and patient engagement in the healthcare system.

Complimenting NHH on its own role in building Ontario's patient engagement experience through the [Partners Advancing Transitions in Healthcare \(PATH\) project](#), now underway in Northumberland, she said:

“You have embraced patients first... you have been pioneers and leaders with The Change Foundation on PATH... you helped inspire us. Thank you.... You were a Health Link before people were even talking about Health Links. You have set the bar high for others.”

President and CEO of KGH since February 2009, Thompson took the helm of the large teaching hospital at a challenging time. Years of operating deficits, high infection rates, and low levels of trust from patients and staff alike led Thompson to launch a community engagement campaign that included conversations with over 2,000 people in the community served.

Out of those discussions came KGH's Patient Advisory Council, now 65 people strong, and an ambitious plan to bring patient and caregiver input into KGH at virtually every level of the organization as the hospital strives to meet its unique corporate promise of “nothing about me without me.”

Asked how she has felt about the value of patient engagement, Thompson was frank. “The future is patients as partners.”

“There are no bailouts,” she emphasized. Echoing a philosophy also at the heart of Northumberland PATH she said: “We’ve got to partner with those around us. By involving patients and families, as well as front-line staff, we will make better choices.”

Heather Sculthorpe, outgoing Chair of the Nominating Committee, announced the names and particular skills of the candidates recommended for the four vacancies on the Board, together with one re-appointment. In accordance with the hospital By-law, Sculthorpe cast her vote in favour of the following slate, elected by acclamation:

- Lynda Kay, Ward 2 – appointed for a 3-year term
- Tom McLean, Ward 2 – appointed for a 3-year term
- Eduard Merbis, Ward 3 – appointed for 3-year term
- Elizabeth Selby, Ward 3 – appointed for 3-year term
- Bill Gerber, Ward 2 – re-appointed for 3-year term

The final order of business before the members was amendments to the hospital By-laws. Tom Sears, Chair of the Board's Governance Committee, summarized the black-lined version of the proposed edits distributed in advance to members and made available to the general public via the hospital's website or, on request, from hospital Administration.

All amendments were approved, the principal highlights being:

- changes to membership to further transition the Corporation to a skills-based Board with the Directors being identified as the only Members of the Corporation;
- changes to the Board's quorum requirements at Annual and Special meetings to a simple majority of Members;
- housekeeping updates with regard to current Board committees to bring the By-laws up-to-date with current Board practice;
- amendments to the By-laws related to Chief of Staff appointment/oversight, to include further detail and incorporate input from the past year's recruitment process; and
- enhanced wording with regard to oversight of Associate staff.

### **What's PATH?**

***PATH is an exciting local project working with a \$3-million research grant from The Change Foundation to improve seniors' experiences as they move in, out of, and across Ontario's health system. Led by NHH, the project involves local seniors, caregivers and close to a dozen health and community agencies. For details, please follow the links on [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca)***

For an updated copy of the Board's By-laws, reflecting these updates, please see the Document Archive at [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca)

At the Board meeting immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Members, Board Directors unanimously appointed Jack Russell as the Board's Chair for the next two years. Also appointed unanimously were John Hudson, First Vice-Chair and Catharine Tozer as Second Vice-Chair.

For further details on 2014/15 NHH Board members and community committee volunteers please see [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca); the hospital's 2013/14 Annual Report will be found in the same website's Document Archive with a hard copy scheduled for distribution to households receiving the local Northumberland News on Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup>.

**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, and obstetrical care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care, rehabilitation and palliative care. 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](http://www.nhh.ca) or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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