



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NHH set to renew commitment to policy of no smoking on hospital grounds as the province strengthens anti-smoking laws across Ontario

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, December 23rd, 2014—January 18th to 24th, 2015 is National Non-Smoking Week in Canada and NHH is starting the new year with a renewed commitment to its policy of no smoking on hospital grounds, including the staff and visitor parking lots at 1000 DePalma Drive.

The policy update, effective January 1, 2015, follows staff consultations that began in the fall when the topic was first raised by a staff member at a CEO/Staff Forum. E-cigarettes will also be prohibited.

NHH's position is in step with enhanced smoking restrictions at the provincial level. Also beginning January 1, 2015, Ontario is strengthening its own anti-smoking laws by banning smoking on children's playgrounds, restaurant and bar patios and publicly owned sports fields. The Smoke-Free Ontario Act will also be revised to bar the sale of tobacco on university and college campuses.

The [CBC has reported](#) that "Ontario's smoking rate was nearly 25 per cent in 2000, but last year the rate fell to 18.1 per cent, representing 332,361 fewer smokers."

The same CBC report quoted statistics showing "tobacco claims 13,000 lives in Ontario each year and costs the province's health care system an estimated \$2.2-billion in direct costs and another \$5.3 billion in indirect costs such as lost productivity."

"Recognizing our hospital's commitment to health and wellness and the linkage between smoking and poor health status, both our Occupational Health & Safety Committee and the Leadership and Quality Committee discussed the subject and approved our renewed commitment and updated policy unanimously," said Elizabeth Vosburgh, Vice President of Human Resources and Quality.

Failure to comply with the hospital's non-smoking policy may result in:

- a) a fine in accordance with the Tobacco Control Act and Town of Cobourg By-Law 02-2003;
- b) in the case of staff, progressive discipline; and
- c) in the case of visitors, eviction.

Patients who are admitted to NHH and need help remaining smoke-free have access to a variety of free smoking cessation supports, including education, counseling, nicotine replacement therapy and other services. Exceptions are made for palliative patients only, and only with the express consent of the Vice President, Patient Services or designate.

Supports for NHH staff members who would like help breaking the smoking habit are also available free of charge.

“While we recognize that smoking is an addiction, we also recognize that, as a hospital, we have a responsibility to model healthy behaviours and ensure our patients, visitors, staff members and volunteers have the healthiest environment possible,” said Linda Davis, President and CEO. “NHH has been smoke-free since October, 2003, but it was felt by many staff members and visitors that a renewed commitment was necessary to help promote the policy and ensure consistent compliance. The province’s enhanced policies offered the perfect opportunity to remind our team and our community of a very simple message: please don’t smoke and, if you choose to do so, please do not smoke on Northumberland Hills Hospital property.”

Smoke-Free Living sessions are offered by the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit at locations throughout the hospital’s catchment area. The next Port Hope group will begin January 7th offering free support and information on how to quit smoking and remain smoke-free; a similar group will start up on January 5th in Campbellford. Another session will begin in Cobourg January 22nd. For details on sessions in January and February contact the Health Unit directly at 1-866-888-4577.

Contact: Jennifer Gillard, Director, NHH Communications and Community Engagement, 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, 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 or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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