



# NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NHH surgeon Kaes Al-Ali to join Pan Am Games Torch Relay through Cobourg, July 4, 2015**

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, June 3, 2015**—A chance encounter with two recruiters stationed at a TORONTO 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games Torch Relay information booth in Toronto's Eaton Centre has landed local general surgeon Kaes Al-Ali a fantastic opportunity.

In an email from relay planners, Dr. Al-Ali learned last week he will have the privilege to carry the Pan Am torch approximately 200 metres through a segment of downtown Cobourg on the local leg of its 41-day journey through 130 communities across Ontario and Canada.

Dr. Al-Ali is one of several area residents who will have the opportunity to carry the flame.

The Town of Cobourg coordinated a local contest last fall to generate interest in local participation in the call for relay participants. As a result of that effort, local student Milton Calderon Donefer was named in April, 2015 as the Town of Cobourg's Pan Am Community Torchbearer. Other ceremonies are also being planned for the flame in Brighton, where the relay will also be visiting.

Rooted in the Games history, the Pan Am flame was lit earlier this month during a traditional ceremony in Teotihuacan, Mexico. It arrived in Canada on May 30th. At its final stop on July 10<sup>th</sup>, at the Pan Am Games Opening Ceremony venue in Toronto, the same flame will light the Pan Am cauldron that will signal the official start of the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am Games.

Dr. Al-Ali moved to Cobourg from Toronto almost three years to the day that has been set for his leg of the torch relay.

"It is a real honour for me, and—actually—for my whole family, to be part of this," said Dr. Al-Ali. "The Pan Am flame symbolizes so many things I value... history, a commitment to excellence, and the coming together of the many cultures and nations that will be participating."

One of three general surgeons operating out of NHH, Dr. Al-Ali practices from a Port Hope office he shares with his colleagues, Dr. Andrew Stratford and Dr. Haig Basmajian. He lives in Cobourg with his wife and their two children.

Dr. Al-Ali obtained his medical degree in Iraq, where he was also involved in humanitarian work during the Gulf War. After post-graduate education and work in Ireland and Qatar, he completed a second residency in general surgery in Canada at the University of Toronto, where he was a breast surgery fellow and clinical associate affiliated with St. Michael's Hospital.

"I've lived in cities most of my life and before visiting Cobourg I'd never been to a place where people greet each other so warmly. I'm running representing our hospital, and our community.

This is just my small way of helping others to see how wonderful Cobourg and all of Northumberland really is.”

For more on the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, including a map detailing the flame’s route through Canada, see the TORONTO 2015 website at [toronto2015.org](http://toronto2015.org).

[The Town of Cobourg](http://TheTownofCobourg) will provide additional details on the activities they have planned for the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am Games Torch Relay in the coming weeks. See [cobourg.ca](http://cobourg.ca) or contact Lara Scott, Community Events Coordinator, at 905-372-5481, ext. 4150 or [lscott@cobourg.ca](mailto:lscott@cobourg.ca)

For more information on Dr. Ali’s participation, please contact Jennifer Gillard at [jgillard@nhh.ca](mailto: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 [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca) or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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