



# NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

## **NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Working together to ensure patients' access to emergency care during the holiday season**

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, December 10th, 2014**—The arrival of flu season and the holiday closure of many local family physicians' offices means Northumberland Hills Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) will be busier than usual this month, especially between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

By planning ahead, and making use of alternative resources for non-emergency situations, we can minimize the seasonal strain on our local ED and help to keep the service accessible for those who need it the most. Below are a few steps we can all take to have a healthy holiday season.

#### **Hand hygiene**

Minimize your risk of catching a bug by washing your hands, often, especially when you are out in public. Hand hygiene is the single most effective step you can take to stop the spread of seasonal viruses.

#### **Flu vaccination - Get the flu shot, not the flu!**

Don't let influenza take the joy out of your holiday season. Protect yourself, your family and everyone you love with a flu vaccination. It's available from most family physician offices, community health centres, walk-in clinics and pharmacies, and it's your best line of defense against a potentially dangerous virus.

#### **Make note of your doctor's holiday hours, in advance**

Many local physician offices will have special hours of operation over the holiday. Now is the time to check to see when your doctor's office will be open and to confirm your family's prescriptions are up-to-date in advance of any closure so you can minimize non-urgent trips to the ED.

#### **Alternative options to the NHH ED**

NHH's Emergency Department is always ready when you need it, but the team does advise that you consider family doctors or community clinics for non-emergency health concerns. If your family physician isn't available, and your situation is non-urgent, you can:

- check the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care **Your Health Care Options website** at <http://www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions> for information on the various health-care services in your area
- get free telephone access to a Registered Nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the **Telehealth Ontario** service at 1-866-797-0000 (TTY 1-866-797-0007)
- visit the **Port Hope Walk-In Clinic**, 249 Ontario Street, Port Hope, 905-885-0611, open Monday – Friday, 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Saturday-Sunday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Note: the clinic is closed statutory holidays (Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day)

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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, 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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