



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Expanded laboratory integration with Peterborough Regional Health Centre will enhance quality, improve staffing efficiencies and ensure local patients have sustained access to latest specialized microbiology technology

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, May 25th, 2016—Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) and Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) will move forward with an expanded laboratory partnership following approval today from the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) Board.

At their open Board meeting in Ajax, the Central East LHIN Board passed a motion announcing that they would not stop the proposed voluntary integration of microbiology services between the two organizations.

The integration, which will see NHH's microbiology needs delivered by PRHC, expands upon a current service arrangement between NHH and PRHC. PRHC currently provides pathology and cytology services for NHH. In March of this year, PRHC also assumed responsibility for the delivery of both microbiology and pathology services for Ross Memorial Hospital in Lindsay, further expanding PRHC's role as the regional leader for the delivery of microbiology, cytology and pathology services.

Microbiology services are now being outsourced in many organizations due in part to the increase in specialization in this area. During their recent External Operational Review of NHH, the Hay Group recommended NHH investigate options for outsourcing microbiology as a means of both cost reduction and sustained quality.

"While we had actively pursued it in the past, the business case for a microbiology integration could not be found at that time to make it feasible," said Linda Davis, NHH President and CEO, in a May 25th presentation to the Central East LHIN Board. "Earlier this year, as identified in our Hospital Improvement Plan (HIP), NHH committed to outsourcing microbiology no later than the end of fiscal year 2017/2018 and issued a new Request for Proposal inviting interest. PRHC's proposal proved positive for NHH in terms of quality, accessibility and cost. As a result of this integration, NHH will be able to increase the targeted annualized microbiology savings anticipated in our HIP to \$75,000 from \$50,000, and, further, move these savings forward into the current fiscal year. As identified in our HIP, NHH continues to work with PRHC and other partners to identify and explore viable integration opportunities."

"The laboratory team at PRHC performs 1.5 million lab tests each year, and has been providing select services to some of our partner hospitals in the region for a number of years," said Nancy Martin-Ronson, VP, Professional & Diagnostic Services, Chief Nursing Executive, Chief Information Officer, PRHC. "With a \$2 million upgrade to modernize and automate our lab in 2015, we have increased our capacity to perform more lab tests, more safely and efficiently. As a regional centre, we look forward to continuing to provide excellent care for patients through this partnership and integration of lab services with NHH."

“The LHIN Board had directed NHH to accelerate the development and implementation of concrete action plans related to integration initiatives in order to achieve the savings contained in its Hospital Improvement Plan,” said Deborah Hammons, CEO, Central East LHIN. “Today’s voluntary integration related to the delivery of microbiology services not only meets the evolving standards related to quality assurance, but also demonstrates that NHH’s Board, physicians, front-line staff and administrators are taking the necessary steps to ensure that the hospital continues to be sustainable and accessible to local residents in Northumberland County.”

From the perspective of NHH patients, there will be no change in the care they will receive. The integration impacts one full-time-equivalent Medical Lab Technologist at NHH. NHH will work with the laboratory team and the appropriate union partner to mitigate impact to local staff. PRHC is expected to begin delivering NHH’s microbiology services in October, 2016.

For more information, please contact: Jennifer Gillard, Director, NHH Communications and Community Engagement, at jgillard@nhh.ca or 905-377-7757 or Michelene Ough, Communications Lead, PRHC, at mough@prhc.on.ca or 705-743-2121, ext. 4259.

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).

About Peterborough Regional Health Centre – Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) is a state-of-the-art regional hospital with a proud local history extending back over a century. The Health Centre is located in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada – a 90-minute drive north-east of Toronto. Funded by the Province of Ontario through the Central East Local Health Integration Network, PRHC opened a new, single facility in 2008, serving a population of 300,000 people in Peterborough and the surrounding region. With a capacity of 494 beds, our regional hospital has one of the busiest Emergency Departments in Ontario, and offers an extensive range of services, including specialized programs in renal, stroke, cardiac, cancer care and vascular surgery. The Health Centre is also the region’s largest employer with more than 2,000 staff, 370 physicians with privileges, and 600 volunteers. For information about PRHC programs and services, please visit our web site at www.prhc.on.ca, or follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/PRHC) or [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/PRHC).

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