



## Senior Leadership Report to the Board - October 2022

**Our Shared Purpose: People First**  
**Our Values: Integrity, Quality, Respect, Compassion and Teamwork**

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### Connected care close to home

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#### **Northumberland PACE Speakers' Series kicks off 2022-23 season with focus on rheumatology and inflammatory arthritis**

The Northumberland PACE speakers' series returned this month for the 2022-23 season with a virtual conversation, this time exploring the subject of inflammatory arthritis.

Moderated by Dr. Mukesh Bhargava and led by Rheumatologist Dr. Jason An, the September 22 talk, titled 'So You've Been Referred to the Rheumatologist,' took place via Zoom.

Dr. An delivered an excellent explanation of what a rheumatologist does and explored the ways rheumatologists can help patients who experience severe symptoms of arthritis. Attendees left the session with more familiarity of the two major types of inflammatory arthritis as well as prevention tips on how to best maintain healthy joints.

Since 2018, with crowd-sourced topics drawn from previous attendees and partner organizations, the Northumberland PACE talks have been offered as free public education sessions on a broad range of health and wellness subjects. They have consistently drawn large groups of community members with a range of questions and perspectives. Like many other events, The Northumberland PACE speakers' series shifted to a virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participating partners continue to increase, with the [Ontario Health Team of Northumberland](#) joining the founding partners at the planning table for the 2022-23 season.

Lasting an hour in length, each PACE event consists of a 30-minute talk, a 20-minute question and answer period with the guest speaker(s) and a short moderator summary.

A recording of Dr. An's talk will be available soon, together with details on future speakers. Watch [www.pacetalks.com](http://www.pacetalks.com) for more. Pre-registration is required but all talks are free of charge!

#### **OHT-N collaboration to promote breast cancer awareness**

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and NHH—together with our Ontario Breast Cancer Screening Program team in Diagnostic Imaging—are pleased to be partnering with the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N)'s first Breast Cancer Screening Campaign.

Throughout the month of October, partners across the OHT-N, including NHH, will be sharing simple, helpful and consistent tips on breast cancer screening, including eligibility, how to schedule a mammogram and tips for early cancer detection and prevention.

More information on the joint campaign will be found on the OHT-N website, [www.ohthumberland.ca](http://www.ohthumberland.ca), or on the websites and social media feeds of OHT-N partner organizations, including NHH, through the month.

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## Accountable care

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### **Awaiting our final Accreditation Canada report!**

NHH was pleased to host three Accreditation Canada surveyors the week of September 12 for our long-awaited on-site survey.

Delayed due to the pandemic, the on-site survey followed a series of self-assessments against Accreditation Canada standards. These standards examine an organization's governance, leadership, risk management, infection prevention and control, communication and medication management measures, as well as the quality of care experienced by patients and families served.

The on-site survey focused on the 'required organizational practices' and other processes used to deliver care, and the whole hospital was involved, from front-line staff and volunteers to physicians, midwives, Board members, patients and families.

While the final report is not yet available, we can share that we were very pleased with the positive feedback conveyed verbally in the preliminary report findings shared by the surveyors in their report-out to the team September 15.

Accreditation Canada is now in the process of examining the surveyors' report before providing NHH with a final report and an accreditation decision (Accredited, Accredited with Commendation or Accredited with Exemplary Standing). Details on that final report will be shared when received, hopefully next month.

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## Responsive and healthy work environment

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### **Pandemic response**

#### ***COVID-19 outbreak over on Restorative Care Unit, regular visiting guidelines resumed as of October 4***

As [announced last month](#), NHH has been experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 in the Restorative Care Unit on the first floor of the hospital. Visiting was temporarily suspended to admitted patients the unit with the exception of imminent end-of-life circumstances.

In an update to staff and media October 4, NHH announced that the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit had declared the outbreak over.

“We are grateful to our NHH team for their persistence to deliver safe and exceptional patient care amidst this latest situation,” said Ellen Douglas, Manager, Occupational Health and Infection Control. “Diligent use of masking from our visitors remains crucial in mitigating the risk of infection. We continue to remind visitors to remain masked while inside the hospital and especially during visits to patient rooms.”

For more, including the infection prevention and control measures in place for the care team, please see the related news release on [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca). Updates on COVID-19 will continue to be shared via NHH’s communication channels and the Haliburton, Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit’s recently updated [Respiratory Diseases Dashboard](#), which provides a high-level assessment of local respiratory virus activity.

### ***COVID-19 Booster clinics under way for staff, physicians and midwives***

NHH’s Occupational Health and Safety office are offering COVID-19 booster clinics for staff, physicians and midwives. Clinics were hosted September 22 and September 28 with additional appointments available on request. The local rollout of the COVID-19 bivalent vaccine (booster) is part of the regional health sector COVID-19 fall preparedness activities. For the latest information on the bivalent vaccine, eligibility requirements and public clinics, please see the HKPR website: <https://www.hkpr.on.ca/>

### ***COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Centre continues from trailer outside NHH Emergency Department***

With ongoing support from a multidisciplinary team of NHH staff and [Ontario Health Team of Northumberland](#) partners, including area primary care providers and Northumberland County Paramedics, the **NHH COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Centre** service is continuing to operate from the portable trailer outside the NHH Emergency Department. Services include COVID-19 assessment, testing and, as appropriate, anti-viral medication support.

Area residents are reminded to please CALL AHEAD to 1-905-377-7783 or toll free 1-833-678-2435 for a phone-based assessment and pre-scheduled appointment. Walk-in appointments are not presently offered. Visit [nhh.ca/covid-centre](http://nhh.ca/covid-centre) for more information. In all urgent situations, call 911 or go directly to the nearest ED.

### ***Universal masking reminder***

While requirements continue to relax outside of high-risk settings, hospitals have a unique responsibility to provide a safe care environment, and we know that masks are one of the most effective steps we can take to protect our patients and each other.

Visitors continue to be provided with a medical-grade mask when they pass through screening and NHH continues to require visitors to wear this mask properly at all times in public and patient areas of the hospital, except when eating or drinking in the Main Street Bistro. NHH’s mask mandate is also applicable to individuals visiting the community mental health program offices.

### ***Caring for the Carer/People Strategy update***

NHH, like other hospitals and care providers throughout the province, continues to experience critical health human resource (HHR) pressures and to minimize the impact of these pressures we remain focused on our multi-faceted efforts to do all we can to **care for the carers**.

NHH remains focused on developing and implementing strategies that create an environment of empowerment and engagement for all. For instance, the caring for the carer strategy was the key driver to the introduction of the clinical internship program at NHH. The clinical internship program is a 12-week orientation program for new graduates that provides benefits such as consistent preceptor, protected schedule and regular check-ins between educator preceptor and intern. NHH's internship program provides a supportive transition for the graduates which contributes to confidence building, improvement of clinical judgement and other skills.

In our June Board update, we highlighted some of the efforts being taken to show this support for the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of staff, physicians, midwives, and volunteers within NHH. We're pleased to share this month that our interdisciplinary Caring for the Carers Engagement Committee—with special support from our NHH Foundation—hosted a successful “NHH Has Talent” event for staff, physicians, midwives, and volunteers. The well-attended event offered an outdoor evening of games, food, and live performances, which included singing duets, to playing instruments, a powerful operatic song, a Tae Kwon Do demonstration, a gymnastics routine, and beautiful paintings. Guests were also given an opportunity to ‘dunk-a-doctor’ at the onsite dunk tank, which drew a large crowd of curious spectators and eager participants. Overall, the event was well-received and sparked conversations of making ‘NHH Has Talent’ an annual event.

As well, NHH has renewed its focus on the continuous professional development of our staff and leaders. Of note is the leadership network development coaching sessions that are now underway featuring a range of educational opportunities ranging from equity, diversity and inclusion to performance and coaching, brave conversations, project management principles, financial variance and reporting, the Ontario Human Rights Code and more.

## **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

Northumberland Hills Hospital's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion priorities continue to move forward through the hard work and careful thought of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Advisory Committee (EDIAC). Truth and Reconciliation have been the focus of our EDI activities through the month of September.

Throughout September, EDIAC shared weekly informational updates regarding Truth and Reconciliation, hosted lunch and learn opportunities, and commissioned NHH's first-ever orange crosswalk as continued steps to encourage education, reflection, and acknowledgment in the truth in our nation's history.

On the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and after a conversation with Alderville First Nation Chief Dave Mowat, EDIAC coordinated the lowering of NHH's Canadian Flag and Ever Child Matters flag to half-mast and held a moment of silence to honour residential school survivors, while remembering the children who were victimized and lost to residential schools. NHH staff, physicians, midwives, and volunteers were also encouraged to wear orange shirts to help raise awareness and continue important conversations about truth and reconciliation.

## **IT latest spotlight in series of internal and external salutes recognizing professions throughout NHH**

September 20 was National Information Technology Professionals Day, and NHH took the opportunity across its communication channels to publicly recognize the hospital's small but mighty IT team which provides around the clock support to every department. Dedicated team members behind the scenes, the IT department's knowledge, expertise and dedication are critical to helping NHH deliver a continuum of services every day.

Earlier in the month similar kudos were shared with Environmental Services Workers as they marked their own appreciation week. The role of ESWs has received some much-deserved attention as a result of the pandemic, with new appreciation for the critical role this team plays to keep patients, families and our team safe inside the hospital.

In combination with NHH's internal intranet, NHH and NHH Foundation social media feeds continue to recognize hospital teams and/or individuals in step with their specific provincial or national days. Thanks to all who help us to thank these teams by engaging with our social media posts and photos and sharing them through your own networks.

### ***People First* – NHH releases new Strategic Plan Framework co-designed with area partners, patients and the community served**

The journey to refresh NHH's Strategic Plan—a multi-year document that guided the organization since 2017—is complete, thanks to a successful collaborative process coordinated by a 23-member multidisciplinary team called the Strategic Planning Collaborative Action Team (SPCAT).

Launched in February 2022 and co-led by President and CEO Susan Walsh and NHH's Board Chair at the time, Pam Went, the SPCAT included senior leadership, representatives from NHH's Board of Directors (including Community Members of the Board), Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) partners, physicians, and other front-line care providers drawn from acute and post-acute services, as well as members of the NHH Foundation and the NHH Auxiliary. Forced by the pandemic to connect mainly in a virtual environment, SPCAT members met regularly to analyze qualitative and quantitative data, make meaning of clinical, demographic and socioeconomic data, and explore ideas.

A unique part of the SPCAT's 2022 strategic planning process was the opportunity to align community consultation with the [Ontario Health Team of Northumberland \(OHT-N\)'s](#) regional strategic planning process, collaborating on external engagement to identify, at a high-level, the health and well-being priorities experienced by area residents and service providers.

This collaboration offered a chance to hear, at a County-wide level, the local health and well-being priorities from a patient and partner perspective, while also cross-sharing information to inform and align multiple strategic plans.

Together with community members and OHT-N partners, NHH's SPCAT participated in five OHT-N strategy 'hive' conversations in May 2022 along with NHH's own strategy intensives before coming together to identify key themes important to the community at large and define calls to action.

Additionally, SPCAT members directly engaged more than 200 individuals in conversations through a series of high-level strategic questions to identify what NHH should pay attention to, as a hospital, as we plan for the future together.

At each point during a process that looked both within the hospital, and beyond, information was distilled and consolidated.

NHH's long-standing core values—quality, integrity, respect, teamwork and compassion—were reaffirmed as the values that will guide the hospital, and its strategic priorities, forward.

As the strategic planning work progressed, key themes emerged to inform draft strategic priorities. Through June 2022, separate discussions were held with senior leadership, the NHH Leadership Network, the Medical Advisory Committee, staff and SPCAT to reflect and fine-tune a proposed strategic framework that culminated with a high-level presentation at the June Annual Meeting of the Board.

Finally, the process of validating feedback with staff and members of the community on the proposed strategic priorities and a new shared purpose, “People First,” was completed in August.

“This journey to engage, plan and co-design the next priorities for NHH within the context of our broader network has strengthened NHH’s strategic plan immensely and set the stage for an exciting and increasingly collaborative future ahead,” said Susan Walsh. “It has been a wonderful experience to be part of this collaborative effort with our community and, on behalf of our Board and our team, I thank all who took the time to share input and help us to arrive at our new Strategic Plan Framework.”

Anchored around the acronym CARE, and grounded in a shared purpose of ‘People First,’ NHH will be guided forward by four new strategic priorities:

- Connected care close to home
- Accountable care
- Responsive and healthy work environment
- Exceptional care, every time, for every person

“Our work will now turn to operationalizing these priorities,” added Susan Walsh, “and bringing them to life across our organization at a program and hospital-wide level. Additionally, shared ‘swim lanes’ are emerging with the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland and community partners, identifying key areas where we can have the greatest impact on patient care and experience when we work together around specific problems.

For more on NHH’s new Strategic Plan Framework, please see the About NHH section of the hospital’s website, [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca).

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## Exceptional care, every time, for every person

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### **Patient and Family Advisory Council welcomes newest patient/caregiver partners**

Our June Board report included a call for interest for volunteers interested in joining NHH’s very active Patient and Family Advisory Council and through the summer we were very pleased to welcome local residents **Bonnie McKee**, **Liane Covert** and **Judy McLean** to our PFAC community.

Established at NHH in December 2016, this Council is now in its sixth year. Through the volunteer Council, patients and caregivers are active in all core patient care areas of the hospital, working as partners with NHH staff, managers, physicians and the Board of Directors on a wide variety of hospital activities, special projects and program-focused quality and practice committees.

With specific roles ranging from equity, diversity and inclusion, seniors care, community mental health and maternal/child care our newest PFAC partners have jumped right in to their involvement at NHH

and are actively partnering in discussions ranging from individual program delivery to hospital-wide projects such as our new patient entertainment systems (see more, below)!

For biographies on all nine NHH PFAC members, and more information on their unique role, please see the [PFAC pages under the Patients tab on NHH.CA](#).

### **More Beds, Better Care Act (Bill 7)**

On August 31, 2022, the new **More Beds, Better Care Act** (Bill 7) received royal assent. Bill 7 is one component of the provincial government's five-point plan, **A Plan to Stay Open: Health System Stability and Recovery**, meant to stabilize the health and long-term care sectors and preserve hospital capacity for acute care patients who need it most.

Bill 7 includes specific provisions for hospitals related to alternate level of care (ALC) patients and would allow certain actions to be performed, provided that reasonable efforts had been made to obtain consent.

On September 14, 2022, regulatory amendments under the **Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021** (FLTCA) and the **Public Hospitals Act (PHA)** were filed. These regulatory amendments have provided some added clarity for hospitals including specific requirements enabling and supporting the changes outlined in Bill 7.

The remaining provisions under Bill 7, and most of the regulatory amendments noted above took effect on September 21, 2022. The amendment related to hospital fees under the PHA takes effect next month on November 20, 2022.

Much commentary has circulated on Bill 7 and whether or not it will be effective at ensuring acute care hospital beds are preserved for those most in need of acute care. The importance of ensuring vulnerable, complex patients are not put at any increased risk as a result of the new legislation is key.

The Ontario Hospital Association has released the following statement:

*“Health care providers in Ontario are committed to working collaboratively with patients, substitute decision makers, families, and caregivers during any transition in patient care. To facilitate a consistent and transparent approach to discharge planning, many hospitals have developed detailed policies and procedures for dealing with this process with an appreciation of the legal framework, obligations, and requirements governing them. With Bill 7 now officially passed, the Ontario Hospital Association is working with Ontario Health and other key stakeholders to develop standardized provincial tools to support the implementation of these legislative changes and any subsequent regulations. We fully expect that the long-standing [“Managing Transitions”](#) guidance will continue to serve as the foundation for this work.”*

An [open letter was also issued jointly last month](#) by GTA and area academic and teaching hospitals endorsing Bill 7.

Discharge planning will continue to be a joint effort at NHH, together with the patient, the family or loved ones they wish to involve, the patient's hospital care team, and community partners including Home and Community Care and area long-term care providers. Options for local residents awaiting a long-term care placement are limited by capacity. NHH remains committed to working together on short- and long-term solutions to our current ALC challenges so that all in our care receive the support they need in the most appropriate location.



## **Upgrade coming to patient entertainment system at NHH**

Improvements are coming to Northumberland Hills Hospital's patient entertainment (TV) system.

In an update shared last month with staff and patients and local media, Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) confirmed that the old patient entertainment system will be removed beginning Monday, October 3.

A working group led by materials management and inclusive of representatives from NHH's IT, environmental services, finance, public affairs as well as NHH's Patient and Family Advisory Council is coordinating the project, with input from patient care managers.

New TVs will be rolled out beginning Tuesday, October 11.

The new TVs will be installed in all inpatient rooms and 22 common areas (e.g. waiting areas and inpatient dining rooms). As the hospital migrates from the old system to the new it is expected that there will be a short period of time without TV service. NHH's new patient entertainment system vendor is experienced with unique hospital applications and is committed to completing the transition as quickly as possible.

The new TV service will be free of charge at the beginning. Once installation is complete the patient entertainment system in inpatient rooms will be priced by the day with discounts available for longer stay patients who may choose to rent the service for longer periods of time. All proceeds from inpatient rentals will come back to NHH for re-investment in patient care.

For admitted patients who move from one unit or bed to another during their stay at NHH, service will be transferrable within the hospital. Patients (or their loved ones) will be able to rent the entertainment service in one of three ways: directly on the bedside TV, online, via the vendor's website, or by phone, through a 1-800 call centre.

Additional information on how patients (or their loved ones) can rent the new service will be shared directly with patients at the bedside and through NHH's communication channels as the upgrade moves forward.