



NHH

Northumberland
Hills Hospital

Senior Leadership Report to the Board

Our Shared Purpose: People First

**Our Values: Integrity, Quality, Respect,
Compassion and Teamwork**

October 2025

Connected care close to home

NHH intensive care services increase to Level 3 Basic

Critical Care Services Ontario (CCSO) and Ontario Health (OH) have recognized NHH's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) as a Level 3 Basic Level of Care Unit,

NHH was formerly identified as a mixed Level 2 Basic and Advanced level of care.

This change in classification brings additional funding to NHH to support increased point of care resources and equipment needed to care for a Level 3 Basic patient population. Looking forward, it also positions NHH to be eligible for a dedicated nurse-led Critical Care Response Team in the future and supports our longer-term master planning process to advocate for a contiguous 10-bed ICU.

NHH has experienced a steady increase in volumes and level of complexity within its ICU patient population. In response, we began a journey to successfully recruit and expand our physician group with specialized critical care expertise and this in turn allowed us to transition to what is referred to as a closed unit in January 2025—a key pre-requisite for Level 3 status.

In a closed ICU model, responsibility for the care of the patient is assumed by the ICU team, led by intensivists, specialists in critical care medicine. While patients may be admitted to NHH via a family doctor, surgeon, or hospitalist, once they're in the ICU, it is the ICU team that manages the day-to-day care.

This advancement to a Level 3 ICU is a win/win for local and provincial needs. It aligns with a priority identified in NHH's Strategic Plan Framework to grow and expand hospital services to better meet the needs of our growing community. Beyond our community, NHH's advancement to a Level 3 ICU will help augment timely access to critical care services across the system and improve critical care patient flow, both identified as provincial priorities for CCSO.

In an internal memo shared with staff last month by President and CEO Susan Walsh and Chief of Staff Dr. Paul Ketov, the entire ICU team was recognized for the hard work that went into the successful achievement of Level 3 status. Special thanks to our ICU leadership team of Dr. Darius Seidler, Medical Chief, Pravin Thayaparan, Program Manager, Danielle Ferreira, Clinical Director, and VP, Integrated Care and Chief Nursing Executive Kate Zimmerman for their support in successfully moving this forward for the community.

NHH and OHT-N on schedule to launch Essential Care Partner pilot project next month (November 2025)

A joint initiative between NHH, the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) and the Ontario Caregiver Organization, an Essential Care Partner (ECP) Program

Pilot Project will soon be introduced across 1A and 1B, NHH's Post-Acute Specialty Services (PASS) programs.

Focused on the unique needs of caregivers supporting patients in the PASS, (including Palliative Care and Integrated Stroke), the ECP Program will bring new policies and practices to NHH with an aim to: better identify essential caregivers, where they exist; proactively include the caregiver as part of the care team; and support the caregiver with education and resources.

Nursing, allied health, social work, Ontario Health atHome staff, clinical information, leadership, volunteers and people with lived experience have all been part of the working group. Education will roll out this month to staff and primary care providers in 1A/1B and supporting communication materials are being developed to raise awareness among patients and caregivers alike, support uptake and evaluate impact.

To learn more about the Ontario Caregiver Organization and its many resources, which include a 24/7 Helpline, webinars, e-learning and group and peer supports, visit OntarioCaregiver.ca

For more about the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland visit OHTNorthumberland.ca

Accountable Care

Accreditation Canada surveyors returning to NHH March 2026

NHH is looking forward to welcoming Accreditation Canada surveyors to the community once again as part of the hospital's ongoing cycle of continuous quality improvement against recognized best practices.

NHH's next Accreditation Canada survey is scheduled for March 2026 and with a theme of *Safety in the Spotlight* preparation is well underway.

Accreditation is more than a milestone, it's a shared commitment to excellence in quality, safety, and experience for everyone at NHH. Through Accreditation Canada and the Health Standards Organization (HSO), we're guided by globally recognized standards that strengthen healthcare organizations and foster a culture where people truly come first.

A key part of this journey is HSO's Global Workforce Survey™, now open to all NHH staff, physicians, and midwives. Replacing our Interim Staff Experience Survey, this tool will provide a deeper understanding of our workplace culture, team dynamics, and the everyday experience of those who deliver and support the delivery of care at NHH. By completing the survey, members of our team will help:

- Shine a light on the experience of working at NHH

- Strengthen our culture of safety, quality, communication, and leadership
- Generate data to guide meaningful, actionable change at an organization and team level
- Enable future benchmarking against like organizations
- Contribute to a data set that may be used for future research at NHH to support organizational learning and development

All staff, physicians, and midwives have received a link to the confidential, online survey. At 65 questions in length, the survey requires ~10 minutes to complete and will be open for input by members of the hospital team until October 31. Further details on NHH's 2026 Accreditation Canada survey team and opportunities to get involved will be shared in future reports.

NHH VP, Integrated Care and Chief Nursing Executive joins Accreditation Canada team as surveyor

In addition to benefiting from the Accreditation Canada process, NHH also contributes to it, now with two members of the hospital's Senior Leadership Team participating as active surveyors.

Susan Walsh, President and CEO, has been an active surveyor with Accreditation Canada for many years. New to the role is Kate Zimmerman, VP, Integrated Care and Chief Nursing Executive, who will be completing her first survey in the spring of 2026.

Senior health system leaders as well as patients contribute to the process throughout the country. By participating actively NHH is both a beneficiary of knowledge gained and a contributor to evolving best practices.

Internal consultations continue as part of NHH Master Planning, external engagement set to run this fall through to new year

NHH is currently conducting a collaborative master planning process that will: "develop the future needs for services and project future space requirements to develop a long-term redevelopment roadmap and final proposal for submission and approval by the Ministry of Health." (Terms of Reference, NHH Master Planning Steering Committee).

Overseen by a Master Planning Steering Committee and supported by our Project Management Office and external subject matter experts in master planning, architecture and design, and data analysis and projection (Agnew Peckham and Cumulus), NHH's new Master Plan—the first since this facility was built—will be informed by input from the Leadership Team, alongside patients, caregivers, providers, and volunteers as well as our community partners and residents.

Distinct from NHH's Strategic Plan Framework, which focuses on a near-term goals and priorities, a hospital Master Plan looks farther in the future, mapping out needs anticipated in future decades. As such, it will:

- build on the current strengths of NHH;
- consider the new opportunities and needs identified during visioning exercises and community consultation;
- address current and anticipated government direction regarding hospital service sustainability;
- position NHH for the necessary Ministry approval and support to advance future growth;
- define NHH's role as a strong medium-sized hospital within the system;
- consider how NHH can be an environmental steward by creating a sustainably accountable organization; and
- leverage innovation and technology to better enable care for generations to come.

Co-chaired by NHH President and CEO Susan Walsh and Board Chair Cyndi Gilmer, and formally launched to internal interest holders in May 2025, this project, titled ***NHH Master Planning - Growing Care for the Future***, will span approximately 11 months in total before concluding in March 2026 with a formal submission to the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health regarding the proposed longterm program and facility requirements of NHH.

To date, NHH has been focused internally. A current and future state data analysis has been completed, as well as facilitated visioning sessions and individual clinical program reviews. Consultations with the Ministry of Health are also ongoing and a great deal of input has been received.

The next major step in the process is “user group meetings,” which will be facilitated on-site by Agnew Peckham, the health care and facility planners supporting NHH's Master Planning process. Over a two-week period, from September 29 through October 10, members of the Agnew Peckham team will be touring all areas of the hospital to physically see our key programs and related supports in action, and to talk with members of leadership and front-line staff/volunteers regarding the adequacy of current space, thoughts on future facility requirements (including space, location and key adjacencies) as well as current and projected workload and staffing.

Calendar holds have been extended to the program directors, managers and—as appropriate— medical leads of each area, together with their related VP, and we thank all who have accepted the invitations to date. In addition, a new online “home” on the hospital's intranet, has been created to hold all documents and related material supporting our Master Planning process.

Planning is happening concurrently to bring the consultation to external partners and community members. Additional details will be sharing in the coming week as our process moves forward, including a resource area planned for NHH's website.

Northumberland Hills Hospital patient experience surveys expanding throughout hospital after successful launch

Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is continuing its transition to a new provincial patient experience measurement program using an online survey platform, Qualtrics.

The new survey platform replaced NHH's Interim Patient and Caregiver Experience Measurement survey, the temporary experience measurement tool unique to NHH and introduced in December 2022.

The new experience surveys are short, electronic and specific to the area in which patients last received care. Patients may access the surveys in two ways:

- through a QR code provided directly on patients' After Visit Summary and
- via email, with reminders, to patients who have consented to receiving email from NHH for this purpose.

The majority (to date) have been taking advantage of the email link.

Rolling out in phases, the surveys have now been launched in the NHH Emergency Department and in all inpatient areas, excluding the Intensive Care Unit, which will have a customized survey launched later this fall, followed by outpatient care areas, inclusive of community mental health.

Priorities for this fall include the completion of the rollout, building of program specific experience dashboards to support information sharing and quality improvement with the care teams and participation in provincial benchmarking which will be overseen by the Ontario Hospital Association.

NHH's focus on patient experience input is in step with NHH's own [Experience Framework](#) and its eight strategic lenses, one of which is "Policy and Measurement." It is also aligned with provincial direction regarding experience measurement and related requirements with regard to funding, specifically, new Ministry of Health Pay for Results (P4R) program requirements.

Feedback continues to be received through all our other channels. See the [Compliments and Concerns](#) section of NHH's website for full details.

Responsive and healthy work environment

NHH VP, People named one of Canada's Top 100 Black Women to Watch

Lola Obomighie, NHH's VP, People, Culture and Organizational Effectiveness, will be honoured later this month at an event in Toronto hosted by Canada International Black Women Excellence (CIBWE) in recognition of being named to Canada's "Top 100 Black Women to Watch 2025". A celebration of "timeless and unapologetic sisterhood," the event will also mark a decade of CIBWE's recognition of Black women leaders across all sectors of the Canadian economy.

Based in Mississauga, the non-profit organization was founded to enable Black women to understand and access the opportunities available in the marketplace by becoming more involved in their development and making informed choices that contribute to their fulfillment.

CIBWE delivers programs through a range of platforms, including events, publications, training, online platforms, social enterprises, capacity building and special projects to connect the Black women they serve to opportunities in Ontario, Canada and beyond. For more context on the organization, see their website: www.cibwe.ca

NHH invited to speak to provincial volunteer community of interest re successful volunteer model

NHH has been invited to present on October 16th to a provincial community of interest (COI) on its volunteer engagement program.

The COI is made up of interested people from across Ontario who are involved in volunteering (typically with older adults) in some capacity as part of their work or in their age-friendly community initiatives.

While some COI members work in hospitals, many are in volunteer management and some are volunteers themselves.

The COI is overseen by the Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program, a program of the Centre for Studies in Aging and Health (CSAH) out of Providence Healthcare in Kingston.

In recent years, particularly following the pandemic, members of the provincial program identified recruiting and retaining older volunteers as a major challenge. Participants requested a dedicated forum for discussion and collaboration around volunteerism for older adults. As a result, the COI was struck in order to engage in discussion on specific topics related to volunteerism of older adults. It is a forum where participants can share their own successes and challenges related to the identified topic for each discussion, and solicit advice from peers.

NHH has been invited to speak to some of the key strategies that have helped to strengthen our own volunteer base, including last year's inaugural volunteer experience survey. Additionally, insight into our Experience Framework and People First shared purpose has been requested.

NHH looks forward to meeting the COI members, sharing insights into our own strategies and learning from others at this table to continually enhance volunteer services throughout the hospital.

Exceptional care, every time, for every person

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30th is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada, also recognized as Orange Shirt Day, which seeks to raise awareness of the experience of Indigenous children who were taken from their homes and placed into residential schools.

Indigenous children who were forced into the residential school system were regularly subjected to mistreatment (sometimes resulting in death) and abuse designed to erode and destroy any and all ties to their language, culture, history, autonomy and sense of identity. Countless children died in the residential school system due to severe mistreatment, abuse, and neglect.

Individuals who did survive were left to contend with the emotional, physical, and mental trauma, compounded by a loss of connection to their Indigenous identity. September 30 was chosen because it is around this time of year that the children were stolen or forced into residential schools.

Residential schools were often run by Christian organizations, mostly Catholic in affiliation, such as churches and monastic facilities. In residential schools, Indigenous children were indoctrinated into ideas of Eurocentric racial, cultural, and religious superiority, while being taught that Indigenous Peoples were inferior. For many, this led to complex struggles and relationships with their own Indigenous roots and identities.

September 30th is also known as Orange Shirt Day, in honour of Phyllis Webstad, who, at age 6, had her orange shirt (a gift from her grandma for her first day of school) taken away from her when she was sent to a residential school. It is an apt metaphor for the various levels of action and impact that these schools inflicted on Indigenous communities.

NHH once again recognized National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in a number of ways, with participation in Alderville First Nation's Truth and Reconciliation walk, the half-masting of flags at the main entrance, the wearing of orange shirts and, early next month, participation in a lunch and learn activity—building on mandatory equity, diversity and inclusion education available through our Learning Management System. In addition, NHH's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory

Committee (EDIAC) will host a fireside chat themed “From Acknowledgement to Action: Perspectives and Practice in Indigenous Health” hosted by Sara Wolfe, Lead, Indigenous Health Strategy, Toronto Academic Health Science Network, and Registered Midwife and RN and a founding partner of the first urban Indigenous-focused midwifery practice. on October 2, 2025 at 12:30 PM.

Enhancements to Emergency Department wait time

NHH will soon be joining the practice of many larger hospitals regarding the awareness of Emergency Department wait times.

With support from our regional partners, NHH’s Emergency Department (ED) leadership, Patient Experience, IT, Performance and Analytics and Auxiliary volunteer teams, the current average wait within the NHH Emergency will soon be accessible on both the hospital website, [NHH.CA](https://nhh.ca), and on a monitor within the main Emergency Department waiting room.

In November, NHH will begin sharing information in close-to-real time, including the average current wait to see a doctor and the volume of patients in the department, with the important caution that wait times vary according to the reason for one’s visit, and the patient volumes and staffing capacity at the time.

All patients, upon arrival, are assessed using the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (CTAS), a nationally and internationally recognized tool which helps clinicians determine the level of urgency for each individual patient, and appropriate assignment with the queue. ED wait times are estimates of how long it may take to be assessed, registered, and seen by a physician or nurse practitioner. These estimates do not reflect the total length of one’s visit, as additional care—including diagnostic tests, or laboratory tests, or treatments—may be required. Placement in this queue may change, based on changes in an individual’s health while awaiting care.

A key message for those looking to department wait time averages to decide when to go to the ED remains the same: “Our team is always here to support the community with emergency care. If you need to be assessed, don’t hesitate. It could be life or death.” Further details will be shared closer to the launch of this new service this fall. Questions? Please reach out to NHH’s Public Affairs office care of info@nhh.ca or by phone at 905-377-7757.