



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS
HOSPITAL

e-Bulletin # 5

Shared Challenge, Shared Solution

Day 2 – Citizens’ Advisory Panel

**Summary – November 7, 2009
Citizens’ Advisory Panel, Day 2**

On November 7, the Citizens’ Advisory Panel (CAP) reconvened at the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) for their second meeting. The CAP is a group of representatives from across west Northumberland who were randomly selected through a civic lottery process. The panelists are meeting five times over seven weekends this fall to provide advice to the NHH’s Board of Directors regarding the services the Hospital can afford to deliver using the funds available. The CAP is part of the Hospital’s *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* collaborative budget strategy launched in December 2008.

Morning Activities: Tour of Hospital

The day began with a review of the NHH Decision Making Framework for Service Prioritization that was developed with the NHH Board, physicians, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders. Panelists organized themselves according to one of the six values of the Framework:

- Accessibility;
- Collaboration;
- Community needs and responsiveness;
- Effectiveness, safety and high standards;
- Relationships and public trust and
- Sustainability.

Each value was well represented, showing that the categories closely matched the interests of the individual Panel members.

In their new groups, Panelists were given a guided tour of the Hospital. Panelists saw first hand the range of services detailed in the Hospital Service Data Sheets through which key details such as service descriptions, patient activity, operating expenses, staffing complement and interdependencies were shared on Day 1.

Afternoon Activities: Learning About Demographics, Services, Physicians and Finances

The rest of the afternoon focused on providing Panelists with an understanding of the community served by NHH.

Chris Altmayer, epidemiologist and consultant, presented key demographics and population health statistics that the Hospital uses to guide its planning and programs. He provided details to the Panelists about the patterns of service use in the area, and discussed future demographic trends.

Next, Helen Brenner, Vice President of Patient Services reviewed the scope of clinical services offered at NHH today, the health team that provides these services as well as the interdependencies between programs and external health service providers. She also reviewed the performance of the Hospital compared to other hospitals of the same size and identified areas where greater efficiency can translate to better health services.

Lunchtime speaker Dr. Michael Bayer, a local family physician and an active supporter of many programs in the Hospital including obstetrics, the Emergency Department and inpatient care, discussed the particular role of community hospitals within the broader health care system. Dr. Bayer illustrated the “path to surgery” and how simple and complex cases are navigated through the Hospital’s services.

Cheryl Turk, Vice President of Finance and Information Services, gave a presentation entitled “Seeing the Financial Future.” She gave Panelists an inside look at how hospitals are funded in Ontario, what financial pressures NHH is facing, the NHH budget process, and current and projected levels of budgetary performance.

The final exercise of the day provided Panelists with an opportunity to use the day’s learning. Using figures provided by the Hospital, Panelists worked in small groups to arrange the twenty-three services according to cost and volume of utilization. They looked for patterns and efficiencies in the rankings.

Conclusion

The day concluded with the Panelists sharing some of the stories gathered from their neighbours and friends about their experiences with NHH. The Public Roundtable Meeting on November 14 was also discussed. Panelists will act as facilitators and spokespeople for the CAP process during the Roundtable, where they will meet and discuss a community vision for NHH with other area residents.

Background

Despite the \$1.4 million in efficiencies gained as a result of a range of efforts launched inside the Hospital in December 2008, NHH continues to forecast an operating deficit. Operating costs continue to rise, the demand for services continues to grow and revenues are not keeping pace with inflation.

By the end of this fiscal year in March 2010, NHH will have run three consecutive years of operating deficits in order to maintain the level of services our community has come to expect and value. This approach is not sustainable in the long term. The Hospital cannot spend more money than it receives.

The provincial government has been clear in its directive: hospitals must fund their operations with the existing resources and they cannot run a deficit. The Hospital's Board, itself made up of volunteer members of our community, firmly believes that it is best to identify options and make choices in consultation with the community

Next steps

As noted above, the Citizens' Advisory Panel is the last step in an iterative, inclusive process designed to develop an NHH Framework for Service Prioritization.

In December, this Panel will apply the final Framework to develop contingency plan scenarios and advice for the Board's consideration. The Board is expected to receive the Panel's recommendations in January 2010.

In its deliberations and decision making in preparing for a balanced budget for 2010/11 and 2011/12, the NHH Board will be informed by the various stakeholder perspectives, including those from the Citizens' Advisory Panel. Any changes in services must be approved by the Central East LHIN.

For the latest information on NHH's *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* collaborative budget strategy, staff members are directed to the dedicated *Shared Challenge, Shared Solutions* tab on the NHH InfoWeb. Those external to the Hospital can access background information on the Hospital's website at www.nhh.ca, and sign up under the RSS listing for email alerts on future e-Bulletins and news releases, as well as soft copies of the Hospital's community newsletter, *In Touch*. Copies of the presentations referenced in this e-Bulletin, as well as the Hospital Service Data Sheets, are also available on the Hospital's website.

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