



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS
HOSPITAL

e-Bulletin # 6

Shared Challenge, Shared Solution

Day 3 – Citizens’ Advisory Panel

Summary – November 14, 2009 Citizens’ Advisory Panel, Day 3 Port Hope High School

On November 14, the Citizens’ Advisory Panel (CAP) met at the Port Hope High School for their third 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 Northumberland Hills Hospital’s (NHH) 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: Service and Value Alignment

Panelists were seated at round tables according to the value they had followed for Day 2. The six values inform the NHH Decision Making Framework for Service Prioritization that was developed with the NHH board, physicians, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders. These values are:

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

Panel Moderator and NHH Board Member Lynda Kay and facilitator Peter MacLeod welcomed the Panelists back and gave them an opportunity to clarify any questions and concerns about the presentations and activities from Day 2.

In small groups, Panelists began by clarifying their understanding of the values. Next, they began evaluating each of the 23 service areas according to their value. They ranked the services based on whether the service was in high/ mid/ or low alignment with the value. This activity built on the ranking exercise from Day 2, where panelists ranked services according to cost and volume of utilization. It required Panelists to use their own judgment about the relationships between each service and the values.

The next task was to compare results. Panelists looked over the service alignments at each of the six tables. They shared their thoughts on the patterns and noted any surprises and differences from their own table. Mingling around the tables provided an informal chance to speak with representatives of each value to reflect, ask questions and anticipate some of the recommendations they would be making in the weeks to follow.

Afternoon Activities: Public Roundtable Meeting

The Public Roundtable Meeting commenced after lunch. Twenty tables were assigned one of the six values and as members of the public filed in, they were asked to think about the values and select which one they would like to focus on for the rest of the afternoon. In addition to the Panelists and several members of the NHH Board of Directors, another 40 residents attended the event which had been promoted in a wide range of forms including direct mail, media coverage, radio ads and the Hospital's community newsletter and website.

Before conversations began, Robert Biron, President and CEO of NHH, provided an overview of the Hospital's finances and the *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* collaborative budget strategy. The *Shared Challenge, Shared Solution* strategy has found \$1.4 million in efficiencies. Despite these efforts, Biron stressed that difficult decisions still need to be made. Reaching out to the community through a Public Roundtable Meeting is a unique opportunity to engage with area residents in this challenging conversation.

After Biron's presentation, the Public Roundtable Meeting began in earnest. For over two hours, the auditorium buzzed with the energy of the different conversations that were underway. Supported by facilitators, the Panelists led conversations that touched on a wide range of topics, from the future of long-term care to human resources and staffing and the work of the CAP itself.

Each of the tables had an opportunity to talk about their own experiences and impressions of the Hospital. Participants commented on how they saw the value reflecting their own experiences of NHH services. They also had an opportunity to provide Panelists with feedback, suggestions and ideas to explore as the CAP continues their work.

Participants asked tough questions about the possible duplication of health services (in the Hospital and in the community), potential new sources of revenue and other solutions for the budget challenges. Participants also asked about other providers within the system and

their roles and possibilities for partnership (e.g. CE LHIN, CCAC). Others shared their own personal experiences with the Hospital.

Conclusion

When the Public Roundtable meeting concluded, the members of the Citizens' Advisory Panel assembled in a circle to discuss what they heard. Overall, they were extremely pleased with the fresh viewpoints they heard. While there were many concerns voiced by participants, Panelists were pleased with the collaborative nature of the Public Roundtable Meeting. With the learning and consultation phases of the process complete, the Panel will reconvene on November 28 to begin preparing their advice to the Hospital Board.

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*. A copy of the presentation from Robert Biron to the Public Roundtable Meeting referenced in this e-Bulletin is available on the Hospital's website.

Contact:

Jennifer Gillard
Director, Communications and Community Engagement
905-377-7757
jgillard@nhh.ca