



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS  
HOSPITAL

**e-Bulletin # 7**

*Shared Challenge, Shared Solution*

**Day 4 – Citizens’ Advisory Panel**

**Summary – November 28, 2009  
Citizens’ Advisory Panel, Day 4**

On November 28, the Citizens’ Advisory Panel (CAP) reconvened at the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) for their fourth meeting. The CAP is a group of representatives from across west Northumberland who were randomly selected through a civic lottery process. The Panel meets five times over seven weekends this fall to provide advice to the Hospital’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.

Over the course of the first three meetings, the Panelists have learned about the province’s health care system, the demographic trends shaping west Northumberland, and the Hospital’s services and budget. They also attended and helped to facilitate a Public Roundtable Meeting in Port Hope where area residents came to speak about their concerns.

During the fourth meeting on November 28, Panelists learned about the Central East Community Care Access Centre and the Port Hope Community Health Centre, two partners who also provide health care services to residents in west Northumberland. They also heard from Dr. Kathy Barnard-Thompson, NHH’s President, Medical Staff, who brought the perspective of NHH physicians to the discussion. Following the final presentation, Panelists began a series of group and individual exercises to begin identifying what they perceive as the Hospital’s core services.

### **Morning Activities: Hearing from Community Health Service Providers**

After a review of Day 3 by NHH Board member and moderator Lynda Kay and facilitator Peter MacLeod, Panelists heard three presentations about health care services outside of NHH.

Don Ford, CEO of the Central East Community Care Access Centre (CE CCAC), spoke first. He explained that Ontario's 14 CCACs work in communities across the province to connect people with quality in-home and community-based health care. With an annual budget of \$205 million and 30,000 clients a day, the CE CCAC was described by Ford as a 'hospital without walls': it provides an enormous array of essential services, but because many of those services are delivered in people's homes, the total impact of his organization is never seen.

Ford discussed his organization's strategic priorities as well as the pressures he faces. Like NHH, the CE CCAC is facing a budget shortfall as demand for its services continues to grow. He also noted the widening gap between people needing Long Term Care or Alternative Level of Care beds and the number of beds that are available.

Dr. Kathy Barnard-Thompson, President of the Medical Staff at NHH, spoke about the Physician Workshop in October (see **e-Bulletin #2**), and the important role performed by family physicians at NHH. Using the example of maternal/child care, Barnard-Thompson noted that 36% of births at NHH are staffed by family doctors, compared to 3%, provincially. Family physicians also support emergency and other hospital services at NHH, including intensive care.

John Hassan, Executive Director of the Port Hope Community Health Centre (CHC), was the third speaker. His organization's three priorities are primary health care, health promotion and prevention, and community development. This focus makes the Port Hope CHC a "one-stop shop" for community health care needs, and with 20 full-time staff, the Centre helps address local doctor shortages. He also noted that his Centre is working hard to address diabetes, mental health, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and obesity — each of which are major health concerns in the area. In addition to providing further primary care resources to the community, and easing reliance on the NHH Emergency/Fast Track services for primary care, the Port Hope CHC sees further opportunities to collaborate more closely with NHH in the areas of diabetes prevention, pandemic planning and mental health and addictions.

### **Afternoon Activities: Creating Service Scenarios**

The three morning presenters concluded the CAP learning curriculum. By now the Panel members had heard from a dozen speakers and covered nearly 400 slides concerning many different aspects of health systems planning. They were now prepared to begin framing their advice to the Hospital Board. After lunch, Robert Biron, President and CEO of NHH, wished the Panelists a productive afternoon before leaving the group to work in private — much like a jury during its deliberations.

The Panelists began by revisiting their work from the previous session. They discussed how they had determined the alignment of each service with the six values that had been

developed together with the Board, internal stakeholders and physicians. Then they synthesized those perspectives and ranked each of the Hospital's 23 services according to their own views on which services were most essential to the Hospital's values, mission and future.

When the Panelists shared their individual rankings, four distinct patterns or clusters could be seen. New groups based on these clusters formed to discuss the implications of their choices and develop distinctive scenarios. For each scenario, the group was asked to explain their rationale, possible enabling factors, obstacles and challenges, as well as the anticipated savings that would result in the case of service reductions. These draft scenarios were submitted for NHH management to review and share comment on at the CAP's final meeting.

### **Conclusion**

Day 4 marked the conclusion of the learning phase and the beginning of the deliberation and recommendation phase of the CAP process. The CAP meets for the last session on Saturday, December 5 to revise and refine their visions and service scenarios and finalize their recommendations to the 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](http://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 from the Central East CCAC and the Port Hope Community Health Centre are also available on the Hospital's website.

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