



# NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

## NEWS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE

### **COVID-19 on the rise among admitted inpatients – All visitors reminded of NHH's universal masking policy, a critical tool to minimize risk of transmission and illness together with vaccination**

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, August 4, 2022** – The number of admitted patients at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) continues to rise as case counts increase in the region.

“Sadly, COVID-19 has not gone away,” said Susan Walsh, President and CEO, in sharing the information earlier today with hospital staff, physicians, midwives and volunteers. “We currently have eleven admitted patients confirmed positive for COVID-19. Some are here because of COVID-19, some came to hospital for other reasons but were found to have COVID-19 through our screening procedures and, unfortunately, some (five individuals) appear to have contracted COVID-19 while inside the hospital through person-to-person transmission.”

The eleven in-patients currently being treated and monitored for COVID-19 are located on three units: the 2A and 2B medical/surgical units on the hospital’s second floor as well as on Inpatient Rehabilitation on the main level.

“Our infection prevention and control team is working closely with counterparts at the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU). We are taking every step possible to minimize opportunities for the transmission of COVID-19 inside the hospital and we thank everyone for their continued cooperation and support.”

As a precaution, patients and staff considered more at risk of exposure have been tested. Patients recently discharged from the units are in the process of being contacted and provided with instructions regarding self-monitoring and, as appropriate, testing.

The following infection prevention and control measures are in place:

- **Daily self-screening by staff for COVID-19 symptoms** – All individuals entering the hospital for work are required to pre-screen for symptoms and refrain from entering the building or community mental health offices in the event symptoms develop.
- **Mandatory use of appropriate PPE** – All staff, physicians, midwives and essential caregivers/visitors are expected to pay strict attention to PPE requirements throughout the hospital and NHH’s universal masking policy remains in effect.

- **Cohorting of patients considered “high risk contacts”** – Any patients identified as having a high risk of exposure have been co-located into the same area, tested and cared for with appropriate precautions. New admissions continue and will be evaluated on an as-required basis in consultation with Public Health.
- **Mandatory vaccination of staff** – All staff and physicians are required to be up to date with their vaccines (two doses); booster vaccines will continue to be distributed to further reduce the risk of infection and spread.
- **Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene practices** – Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene will continue to be reinforced.
- **Enhanced environmental cleaning** – Increased cleaning of the units and increased cleaning of equipment shared between patient rooms.
- **Proactive communication** – In addition to reaching out directly to all patients involved and to those recently discharged, public notices will be placed on all appropriate hospital entrances as well as to the doorways within/leading to the units involved to promote awareness of the presence of COVID-19 and the importance of vigilance with PPE.

NHH remains fully operational, but patients and visitors are encouraged to remain mindful of the following:

#### **Universal masking policy remains in place**

As a high-risk setting, NHH’s universal masking policy remains in place throughout the hospital and Community Mental Health offices. Visitors will continue to have access to free masks on entry to the hospital and NHH’s Community Mental Health offices and will be asked to keep their medical-grade mask on at all times (or over top of their personal cloth mask) while inside, unless eating or drinking in designated areas. No eating or drinking is permitted by visitors in patient rooms.

#### **In-person visiting paused for inpatients confirmed positive**

The Health Unit has formally declared a COVID-19 outbreak at NHH. At this time, visiting has been paused for those inpatients who are in isolation for COVID-19 infection or exposure. For details on NHH’s Visiting Guidelines, including exceptions, [please see our website.](#)

Updates on NHH’s COVID-19 status will be communicated through the hospital’s website and related social media channels. Community outbreak information will be found on the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit website, <https://www.hkpr.on.ca/category/my-community/outbreaks/>

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**About Northumberland Hills Hospital** – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care,

obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than 700 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca) or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp) or Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp). Media contact: Jennifer Gillard, Senior Director, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, at 905-377-7757 or [jgillard@nhh.ca](mailto:jgillard@nhh.ca).

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