

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**A message from your Northumberland County hospital CEOs:
As COVID-19 cases increase in and around our region, it is more important than ever that
we stay vigilant and do all in our power to follow four simple public health measures**

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Tuesday, September 22, 2020—With the concerning uptick in COVID-19 cases in Ontario, infectious disease experts, health care providers and public health leaders are strongly encouraging Ontarians to stay vigilant and do all in our power to follow the public health measures that will help to minimize spread, keep our province functioning and avoid wide-scale illness and even death.

On September 13, the [President of the Ontario Hospital Association also issued a statement](#), emphasizing the “personal responsibility” we all have as citizens to stick with “the public health measures that are essential to saving lives and preventing a second wave of this deadly pandemic.”

As the CEOs of Northumberland County’s two acute care hospitals, we echo these calls to action.

Our teams have worked hard to safely and gradually restart the flow of patients, visitors and (to a limited degree) volunteers into Northumberland’s two hospitals: Northumberland Hills and Campbellford Memorial. Screening at our entrances, universal masking and physical distancing inside our buildings are just some of the steps we are taking to ensure safety while delivering care, together with some limitations on visiting. The majority of surgeries, procedures and tests have now resumed for patients whose non-urgent procedures had to be postponed during the first wave in order to maintain hospital capacity.

The pandemic has been with us for more than six months. Up to now, Northumberland County had experienced far fewer confirmed positive cases than many regions in the province. We could all take personal pride in this hard-won accomplishment, as it was the result of diligent and deliberate efforts by many to follow public health advice.

In the past month, however, we have unfortunately seen a steady increase in the number of positive cases in Northumberland County. We have also, sadly, received [confirmation from our Public Health partner of Northumberland’s first COVID-19-related death](#). And we know from the experience of other regions of Ontario and other corners of the world, the situation can change very quickly. Relatively low rates of confirmed positive cases and death can increase if public health advice is not heeded.

Northumberland is not a COVID-19 hotspot—yet. Schools have reopened. Business have returned to service. But we cannot be complacent. As the province cautioned when [it announced on September 19](#)

[that private social gatherings would once again be curtailed](#), we each need to maintain our personal commitment to do all in our power to minimize the chances this virus has to spread.

Four simple but critical actions are going to be key to keeping our families and our communities safe at this time:

- 1) keep 2 metres (6 feet) of space between yourself and others outside your household
- 2) wear a face covering if physical distancing is a challenge or mandated (as it is in hospitals)
- 3) wash hands frequently and thoroughly
- 4) avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

With the flu season almost upon us, inpatient occupancy levels already extremely high in our Northumberland hospitals, and a second wave of COVID-19 said to be landing in some parts of our province, we in Northumberland are facing a possible coming together of forces that could seriously impact our hospitals' ability to deliver the essential health services patients and families rely on us to provide. Our teams are ready to do all in our power to meet the need for care as it arises. It is critical that we each continue to follow the four simple steps above. COVID-19 is in Northumberland, but if we stay vigilant we can certainly stop it from getting out of control.

On behalf of our teams, thank you for all that has been done in Northumberland, in households, businesses and organizations, to keep COVID-19 cases low to this point. Thank you, too, for your continued kindness to one another as we all respect the necessary precautions. We are, without a doubt, in this together.

For the latest hospital news on COVID-19, and links to useful local, regional and provincial resources, including Assessment Centre information should you need to get tested, please see our websites: www.nhh.ca/covid-19 and www.cmh.ca.

Sincerely,

*Linda Davis,
President and CEO, Northumberland Hills Hospital*

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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 and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East) – formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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