



# NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Raising awareness about the importance of advance care planning

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, April 13th, 2016**—National Advance Care Planning Day is April 16<sup>th</sup>. To build awareness about the importance of talking with loved ones and health care providers about your own future health care wishes—and the wishes of those you love—Northumberland Hills Hospital Professional Practice Leader Kayleen Peters and Dmitri Goold, a Nurse Practitioner with the Central East Community Care Access Centre’s NPSTAT program, are sharing information with providers and community members at NHH as well as several local long-term care homes and primary care offices.

“There’s an old saying that there’s nothing more certain than death and taxes,” said Peters. “We all know that death is inescapable, but none of us know how or when it might happen. That means that you may someday need to make medical decisions on behalf of a loved one, perhaps during a time of crisis. Would you know what to say?”

A Substitute Decision Maker (or SDM) is an individual chosen to speak for someone if they can’t speak for themselves. Identification of an SDM is an important part of advance care planning—a process of reflecting on and communicating your future health care wishes to others.

If you are a Substitute Decision Maker (or think you might be) for a loved one, it’s important to ask yourself these questions:

- Do I understand what’s important to my loved one? Do I know their health and personal care wishes?
- Am I willing to communicate those wishes, even if they aren’t what I would choose?
- Am I able to communicate clearly with health care professionals and ask questions?
- Can I make difficult decisions, even during stressful times?
- Do I know what the legal requirements are in my province/territory?

Research has shown that advance care planning significantly reduces stress, depression, and anxiety in family members and caregivers who know the wishes of their loved ones and can act with confidence if needed.<sup>1</sup> It’s so important to have conversations in advance, so that you are sure you know what your loved one wants when the time comes.

Need help getting started? Visit [www.advancecareplanning.ca](http://www.advancecareplanning.ca) for resources, including workbooks, conversation starters, videos and information about legal requirements and local resources in each province and territory. Prefer hard copies? Stop by the advance care planning information booth through the week of April 12 to 17. The booth will be located on the main floor of NHH, adjacent to the Main Street Bistro.

Don’t be left wondering what to say – take the time to talk to your loved ones today and learn what’s important to them. It’s one of the best ways that we can care for each other.

For further information: Jennifer Gillard, Director, NHH Communications and Community Engagement, [jgillard@nhh.ca](mailto:jgillard@nhh.ca) or 905-377-7757.

<sup>1</sup> Heyland, DK, Allan DE, Rucker G, Dodek, P, Pichora D, Gafni A. Discussing prognosis with patients and their families near the end of life. Impact on satisfaction with end of life care. Open Medicine 2009, 3(20:71-80)

**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, and obstetrical care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care, rehabilitation and palliative care. 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 the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit [www.nhh.ca](http://www.nhh.ca) or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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