



MEDIA RELEASE

Niagara Health System recruiting for new Community Advisory Committee and Board vacancy

October 29, 2014

Niagara Health System is pleased to announce the organization is moving forward with the formation of a Community Advisory Committee to the Board, with an application process beginning today. This move is in support of an important recommendation from Dr. Kevin Smith's final report as Supervisor, and builds on the organization's renewed commitment to meaningful community engagement. Simultaneously, NHS is also announcing the beginning of recruitment of a skilled candidate from the community to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors, which is comprised of volunteer leaders from across the Region.

NHS Board Chair Dr. Barry Wright emphasizes the Board's interest in hearing from the public. 'The Board is clear that the future of healthcare will rely on more input from families and the public-at-large, not less. We agree with Dr. Smith that the organization needs to seek these important opportunities for two-way discussion, and we are excited to see the establishment of the Community Advisory Committee to contribute their feedback on our plans.'

NHS President Dr. Suzanne Johnston notes, 'As I am really getting to know the communities, I am struck by how impactful it is that we are listening and collaborating in new ways. Starting with our recent engagement work in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and leading up to this new Community Advisory Committee, we hope the people we serve will see a desire for honest discussion, and a validation by us about their aspirations and concerns. And there will be more opportunity for input and discussion to come.'

The Community Advisory Committee is being established to ensure linkages to the community. This important point of contact speaks to the organization's commitment to enhancing community engagement and two-way dialogue about important decisions and developments regarding the hospital. Up to a total of 10 individuals from across the region will be selected to join this important committee, along with 2 current members of the Board of Directors, and 2 current community members of Board Committees. Members of the committee will be selected by the Community-Based Nominating Committee that Dr. Smith established to provide an arm's length process to populate the current NHS Board of Directors.

Individuals interested in being considered a candidate for a volunteer position as a Director for the Niagara Health System, or as a member of the new Community Advisory Committee, and are willing to make the necessary time commitment, can find the application process information online at www.niagarahealth.on.ca

Applications should be submitted by Monday, November 24, 2014; 4:00 p.m.

Should I apply to join the Committee?

Everyone is welcome to apply to the Committee. Candidates for the Community Advisory Committee with the following skills and abilities are preferred:

- Knowledgeable about the hospital's plans for the future including the Supervisor's report; and supportive of the need for change in local healthcare
- Credible in local community of residence; seen as a coalition builder versus a divisive voice
- Possessing a communications style that is inclusive, respectful and professional
- Concerned about healthcare for the Region as a whole; not a single-issue advocate
- Interested in facilitating greater understanding of healthcare planning and decision-making.

Why one Community Advisory Committee and not two per Dr. Smith's report?

In January 2014, the Minister of Health approved Dr. Kevin Smith's report, which included the recommendation of 'two Community Advisory Committees will be formed to advise the Board on local issues and form an important linkage to the community.' Following a review of the implementation of the plan at the Board, it has since been decided that one committee would better promote unity across the region.

When will the Community Advisory officially begin its work?

Following an orientation program, it is expected the Community Advisory Committee would begin regular meetings in Spring/Summer 2015.

What will the Community Advisory Committee do?

The Committee will likely undertake the following among its duties:

- Serving as a resource for communication to and from the community on the work and plans for the hospitals and their impact on the communities served
- Reviewing reports on the organization's performance, including community input and engagement activities (e.g. polling), quality, access, patient satisfaction, and others as required
- Receiving presentations from community groups and partner organizations
- Receiving updates on the organization's strategic plan, capital plan, and community engagement plans
- Identifying current and emerging needs in the community

- Reviewing plans to address community concerns that were raised through the committee or elsewhere
- Where applicable, co-operating with the organization's leadership to formulate solutions by providing advice
- Providing quarterly reports on the above to the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors
- Reviewing the Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities annually and providing input.

Will the Community Advisory Committee have decision-making powers?

The work of the Committee will fall across a spectrum of activities from informing and consulting, to more involved collaborative work. Although the Committee does not have the decision-making authority of the Board, there are likely to be occasions where the Committee is asked to provide advice or recommendation.