

# ONEFOUNDATION

for Niagara Health System

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday, November 27, 2013

## **Foundations for Niagara Health System amalgamate to form One Foundation**

The six hospital foundations serving Niagara Health System are pleased to announce our Boards have agreed in principle to move forward with an amalgamation of our Foundations, forming *One Foundation for Niagara Health System*.

For several months, the foundations have been contemplating an amalgamation, primarily to better coordinate their fundraising efforts across all communities served by Niagara Health System.

“Our volunteer Board members all recognize that we can do more for our hospitals working together than we can being apart, and our donors expect the very best management and oversight,” said Ruth Ann Nieuwesteeg, Chair of the Greater Niagara General Hospital Foundation Board, and Chair of the One Foundation Committee. “This way we will not have duplication of staff roles, and can maximize what we can accomplish in terms of dollars spent and keeping the community aware of the urgent needs of our hospitals.”

The foundations confirm they continue to have a fiduciary and moral responsibility to respect donor’s wishes to direct gifts to areas of their special interest as One Foundation. Donors in all communities will be able to direct their gifts to sites or programs locally or to regional programs and services such as cardiac, stroke, cancer and mental health. Wishes regarding existing donor funds will also be honoured moving forward.

Mike Watt, incoming Chair of the One Foundation Board, sees the amalgamation in the context of the evolution of healthcare in our region. “We can see with the last campaign a need to fundraise in all communities for important programs like cardiac, cancer, stroke, ophthalmology, mental health, and women, babies and children’s health, and now we are looking at the very real possibility of a new hospital in South Niagara that we will all benefit from,” he said. “We also need to continue fundraising for equipment and other needs at the current six sites while this evolution takes place. The One Foundation initiative clearly demonstrates that our Board leadership and staff are ready for healthcare fundraising in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

Sue Matthews, Interim President and CEO of Niagara Health System, said the NHS is very supportive of the proposed amalgamation. “We give great credit to the Foundation leadership for their bold, innovative thinking. We remain grateful to our donors, without whom nothing would be possible, and agree their wishes will be best served by a single Foundation fundraising on behalf of our hospitals in all communities of Niagara.”

John Fisher, President and CEO of Walker Industries, took the amalgamation as a sign of good things to come. “On behalf of the Walker Family, the new hospital’s largest donor, and on behalf of our many hard-working employees who have also contributed to Niagara hospitals in their own way, we are encouraged to see the Foundations take this leap. With the Foundations working together, the residents of Niagara should feel confident that their hospitals will be well-supported into the future.”

It is expected the amalgamation will be completed sometime in January 2014. In the coming weeks and months the Foundations will complete legal work, and as One Foundation begin recruitment for a single CEO replacing four executive director vacant positions at the Foundations, while also engaging with donors and communities about the amalgamation and urgent hospital needs.

Other information:

Foundations taking part in the amalgamation are as follows:

Douglas Memorial Hospital Foundation, Fort Erie  
Greater Niagara General Hospital Foundation, Niagara Falls  
Niagara Health System Foundation  
Port Colborne Hospital Foundation  
St. Catharines General Hospital Foundation  
Welland Hospital Foundation

One Foundation for Niagara Health System Board Members:

Mike Watt (St. Catharines) – Chair  
Ruth Ann Nieuwesteeg (Niagara Falls) – Past Chair  
Joe Maggiolo (Niagara Falls) – Vice Chair  
Cindy Thorpe (Port Colborne) – Vice Chair  
Alan Whitehead (Niagara-On-The-Lake) – Treasurer  
Brad Johnstone (St. Catharines) – Secretary  
Anne Atkinson (St. Catharines)  
Jan Cook (St. Catharines)  
Debbie Cosby (Welland)  
Wendy Edwards (Niagara-On-The-Lake)  
Roland Giguere (Welland)  
John Hopkins (Niagara Falls)  
Barry Kowalski (St. Catharines)  
Tom Mountain (Fort Erie)  
Carmela Rulli (Port Colborne)  
Gordon Statham (Niagara-On-The-Lake)  
Sarah Vasquez (Niagara Falls)  
Deb Zahra (Welland)

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