



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Monday, March 24, 2014**

## **Niagara Health System Celebrating One Year Anniversary**

Today marks the first anniversary of the opening of the Niagara Health System St. Catharines Site and a year full of milestones and successes thanks to a new way of delivering care across Niagara.

“We are excited to celebrate this important milestone. In the 365 days since the St. Catharines Site opened, thousands of patients have benefited from new and expanded regional services that brought care closer to home in a state-of-the-art facility,” says Susan Kwolek, Vice President, Patient Services, and Executive Lead, St. Catharines Site.

“It has been a remarkable and exciting time for healthcare in Niagara,” says Angela Zangari, Interim President and Chief Financial Officer. “Our team has made a smooth transition and accomplished much of what we hoped for; providing the best possible patient care as we continue to build a better healthcare system. I want to thank everyone who made this year a success; those who were our fundraising champions, the hundreds of dedicated staff, physicians and volunteers across our NHS sites, and the community of Niagara for its support.”

Over the past year, Niagara Health System has provided specialized healthcare services across the region. Here are some highlights from 2013/14:

- For the first time in Niagara, residents of the peninsula had access to a full spectrum of cancer care including radiation therapy through the hospital’s Walker Family Cancer Centre. 7,600 radiation treatments were provided to 700 patients.
- Almost 1,300 cardiac care patients were able to receive diagnostic procedures at the Heart Investigation Unit (HIU). The opening of the HIU has meant access to cardiac catheterization for the first time in the region.
- Approximately 2,700 babies have been born at the St. Catharines Site new regional Women’s and Babies’ Unit. The patients and specialized team in this program have benefited from being in one location with the availability of concentrated expertise and training, and a multidisciplinary environment.
- The Mental Health and Addictions Program has started seven new programs, hired 105 new staff members, and recruited seven new psychiatrists with an additional four to join the team in 2014. The availability of new longer-term mental health care has meant that many patients and families no longer have to travel outside the region for care.
- The Kidney Care Program has expanded its care model to include a community-based satellite Kidney Care Centre in Niagara Falls; the first of its kind in the region. The Niagara Falls program has provided 15,400 treatments to 80 patients. NHS now provides dialysis across the region; in Welland, St. Catharines, and Niagara Falls.

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- The NHS's Niagara District Stroke Centre at the Greater Niagara General Site continues to have the best "door-to-needle time" (the amount of time patients wait to receive life-saving t-PA) in the province at an average of 31 minutes.
- The Welland Site opened a Respirology Clinic and has been building a regional Comprehensive General Ambulatory Ophthalmology Program. The program has performed 5,600 cataract surgeries and had patient 2,200 visits.
- The Douglas Memorial, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Fort Erie sites have focused on building improved specialized complex and palliative care services.

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