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NORTH BAY
GENERAL HOSPITAL

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North Bay and District Hospital
Hôpital de North Bay et du district

For Immediate Release

ALC beds needed in the community to relieve serious backlog at hospital

[NORTH BAY November 15, 2007] The impact of the ALC issue at the North Bay General Hospital has escalated over the past two weeks and is being felt throughout the entire organization.

“For many months over one third of the hospital’s acute care beds have been occupied by patients who no longer require acute care and who are awaiting placement in more appropriate settings such as a nursing home or convalescent home,” reported Nancy Jacko, vice president of Medicine and Mental Health and Addictions Care Centres. “These patients are referred to as alternate level of care or ALC patients,” she added.

While the high number of ALC patients at the hospital has been an ongoing issue, this week the hospital is experiencing a significant impact and has no available alternatives.

“Large numbers of ALC patients affect the hospital’s ability to continue to flow patients from Emergency to an inpatient status,” continued Jacko. “Each morning we review the bed situation at our hospital and yesterday, after placing as many patients as possible, we still had five patients awaiting admission from our Emergency Department and two patients who were scheduled for surgery that morning cancelled due to a lack of a bed post-operatively,” she explained.

“This type of stress on our hospital beds also places stress on our staff, the patients in Emergency awaiting beds, families who are concerned about their loved one as well as the ALC patient who is awaiting appropriate placement to meet their needs,” added Jacko.

“As an acute care hospital we are not equipped, financed or have the staffing resources to be able to provide care for all of the ALC patients in addition to the patients requiring our other specialized services,” stated Jacko. “ALC patients require the most appropriate care in the most appropriate setting which is best suited to meet their long term care needs. Currently our district is not sufficiently supplied with appropriate beds to meet the long term care needs of this population. That means that ALC patients are often left to wait for their

placements while occupying acute care hospital beds – far more costly for the health system and a huge stress for patients awaiting acute care beds and for staff and families,” Jacko added.

For the past couple of years the ALC issue has been a systemic problem throughout the province and with that knowledge and the impact of ALC an issue for NBGH throughout this time, the hospital along with community partners such as CCAC, district hospitals, Northeast Mental Health Centre, local nursing homes and the district health unit began to strategize solutions for the ALC issue in the Nipissing/Temiskaming district. Several reports with recommendations and solutions were forwarded to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and more recently to the North East Local Health Integrated Network (LHIN). To date, the hospital has not received approval to proceed with implementing any of the solutions but continues to work with the LHIN towards solving the impact of ALC on the hospital.

The Ontario government recently announced an investment of \$700 million for an *Aging at Home Strategy* that will help seniors stay in their homes with supportive care. The hospital looks forward to seeing the impact these dollars will have for those ALC patients in the district who could manage at home with supportive care.

For further information on the ALC issue and its impact at NBGH, visit the NBGH website at www.nbgh.on.ca and under NEWS (right side of page) is a presentation discussing ALC Impacts or contact the Hospital’s Public Relations Department at 705-495-8127.

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