



## Deep River and District Health Board Highlights November 2025

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### **Board**

- The Board completed its participation in an education series provided by the Ontario Hospital Association, entitled Governance Essentials. The series runs from mid-October to November, with weekly focused sessions. The Board's Governance Committee will review key take-aways from the learning for ongoing improvement.
- The Board received a report on Long Term Care (LTC) operations from the Medical Director, Dr. Elizabeth Noulty. Dr. Noulty provided an update on LTC operations from the LTC Continuous Quality Improvement Committee, including that the committee received an excellent report from the Residents' Council representative and reviewed regular standing agenda items without any concern. The Committee also received a report on new initiative involving programming / activities led by Personal Support Workers designed to support residents' socialization and improved mental health.
- The Board received a report from Chief of Staff, Dr. Ben Amor, providing an update on medical recruitment events that DRDH will be participating in and hosting for the remainder of 2025. It was also shared that DRDH continues to collaborate with partners at the Pembroke Regional Hospital working through access and flow challenges.
- The Board received reports from the Quality, Risk and Safety Committee, the Resource and Audit Committee, and the Community Health Partners Group, highlighting the actions of Board sub-committees and oversight of quality, finances and community engagement.

### **Capital Development:**

- The Board received a report on both the Primary Care Capital Development Project as well as the Long-Term Care Capital Development Project.
  - Primary Care Capital Development – The project team continues to work through deficiency items, which are expected to be completed over the next several months. Progress towards finalization of the project continues, with Colliers and internally, as final reconciliation of project costs is underway. Parking lot lighting around the helipad has been completed, and the DRDH team is working through final adjustments to parking signage as a result of parking lot changes from construction. Planning and prioritization of workflow and space adjustments with the team are underway.
  - Long-Term Care Capital Development - Construction activities continue, with enclosure of the building nearing completion, with the goal of full enclosure before winter 2025.
  - Work with the Four Seasons Conservancy continues to protect trails and surrounding area from rainwater run-off. The Conservancy undertook work to lower a culvert running under the trail to support trail maintenance over the winter months. The project team will continue to monitor water levels and flow to ensure trails are not negatively impacted.
  - The first sessions to determine the philosophy of care for the new LTC programming have been held, with a range of participants including physicians, nurses, dietary team members, administration, personal support workers, partner long-term care homes and community organizations. An additional community partner session as well as a session dedicated to the current LTC residents will continue to explore and gain input into the needs of future LTC residents, with the goal to finalize programming by the end of December to enable work for the LTC staffing plan in January and February.

## **Health Campus Updates**

### **Ambulatory Services**

- The first Cancer Screening Day for unattached patients was successfully held in October seeing more than double the number of participants compared to past screening clinics. A review and debriefing is currently underway to identify adjustments for future clinics. Planning for the next screening day is also currently underway.

### **Building Updates**

- The Sprinkler System Upgrade has been finalized with the existing sprinkler system within the Four Seasons Lodge now tied into the new system throughout the building.
- Phase one of the Nurse Call System Upgrade has been completed, with turnover of systems and final information sharing confirmed. Planning for phase two of the system expansion is underway, to implement enhanced safety measures for staff through badge alerts and tracking.

### **Communication & Community Engagement**

- A town hall meeting was held for all team members to share results from the nursing workforce survey, the employee engagement survey, as well as updates on LTC Development. 25 team members participated in person and on-line, with the recording available for any interested team members on the organization's online learning platform.

### **Diagnostic Imaging**

- In October, the organization celebrated Medical Radiation Technologist (MRT) Week, recognizing the skilled professionals who make X-Ray imaging possible.

### **Emergency Department**

- Working groups are under development to support Emergency Department nursing team members in a redesign of the triage desk as well as the medication area within the department. Over the next several weeks, team members will work on plans to redesign the space with the goal to improve functionality and safety for both team members and patients.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

- In partnership with Emergency Management Ontario, DRDH will be hosting Incident Management System (IMS) 200 training in February on site. The goal is to ensure as many potential members of DRDH's Incident Management Team have training, as well as to offer the opportunity to local partners in need of IMS education and support.

### **Engagement & Wellness**

- The 2025 Employee Engagement Survey has now completed, with results shared with team members at the town hall on November 12. 36%, or 65 staff responded to the survey, providing insights across six key areas of role, training and development, team dynamics, management and support, health and safety, overall experience, and future with DRDH.
- The 2025 result were shared with the Board, in comparison to the last staff survey conducted in 2023, and demonstrated meaningful improvement in most domains of employee experience. The Board learned that improvements were noted in areas of communication, empowerment, and teamwork - with notable increases in employee consultation about organizational change, recognition for good work, and confidence in supervisors. The Board was advised that employees continue to express strong pride in the quality of care delivered and report positive relationships with their immediate teams. The Board acknowledged the emerging concerns in workload manageability and stress, as well as modest declines in perceptions of senior leadership's visibility and support for a safe workplace. These insights suggest that while engagement and culture have strengthened, pressures on capacity and wellness persist.

The leadership team, with input from all team members, will work towards identifying priority areas and ongoing actions to improve employee experience and alignment both now and in the future. Initial focuses including supports to help team members achieve a healthy work-life balance and overall wellness and identify opportunities to strengthen engagement and, in turn, support organizational growth, stability, and achievement of strategic outcomes.

#### Family Health Team

- Recruitment of a Physician Assistant for the Family Health Team (FHT) continues, with outreach occurring to partners to attempt to fill this new position at the health campus.

#### Human Resources

- Preparation for implementation of the new electronic scheduling system remains ongoing, with the Go-Live date pushed to February to support confirmation of system functionality and process. Training for core users, managers and supervisors continues, with front user training planned for January and February of 2026.
- In partnership with the Champlain Hospice Palliative Care Program, the organization hosted a Learning Essential Approaches to Palliative Care Mini (LEAP-Mini) Course in November. The course provided education focused on inter-disciplinary palliative care. DRDH had 8 participants in the program, representing a variety of disciplines including nursing, personal support, social work, and physicians.
- Completion of the 2SLGBTQ+ Foundations Course continues across the organization, with 53% of team members having completed the course as of mid-November.

#### Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)

- Preparation for the fall respiratory season is underway, with the IPAC and leadership team reviewing recently released preparation guidance documents to enhance readiness. Inpatient occupancy and surge is predicted to peak in January, and regional groups have been enabled to manage the anticipated increase in demand over the coming months.
- The annual influenza campaign is underway, with 49% staff having received vaccination to date.

#### Medical Affairs & Recruitment

- DRDH is hosting all medical residents currently enrolled in the Rural Medicine Program through Pembroke Family Medicine Teaching Unit for and education and social day. Medical Residents will participate in collaborative education with our local physician group, as well as participate in social activities throughout Deep River with the goal to highlight and showcase the campus, the town, and future practice opportunities. November's session is the first of what will be quarterly visits to Deep River for medical residents to participate in similar days.

#### Medical Inpatient Unit

- New Computerized Ambulatory Delivery Devices (CADD) pumps were launched on the Inpatient Medical Unit – the first infusion pumps with an integrated drug library – ensuring that medications are delivered accurately and safely.

#### Nursing

- Outcomes from the one-year follow-up survey of nursing staff were shared with the Board, following engagement with union groups as well as with nursing team members. The 2025 Nursing Survey Results demonstrated year-over-year results for key areas, such as burnout, gaps in education and skills development, staffing composition and communication, which were identified last year through an identical survey conducted in August 2024. It was noted that the 2025 survey, with a similar response rate, showed improvement across all key areas, demonstrating that the actions put in place over the last year, such as stabilizing leadership, improving workflows, enhancing education access, and strengthening communication and

staffing strategies have been effective in indicating positive progress in nursing team morale and overall workplace wellbeing, with work toward continued improvement ongoing.

#### Quality

- Drafts for both the 2026-2028 Patient Safety Plan and Accessibility Plan are under development, with input provided by the Patient and Family Advisory Council and Quality, Risk, and Safety Committees. Ongoing discussions with leadership, alignment with best practices, accreditation requirements, and anticipated operational need will continue to inform plan development over the coming weeks, with the goal to present draft versions in Q4.
- The Board received the Corporate Scorecard for their information with data populated for the month of October of FY 2025-2026. Discussion took place around negative data trends related to team members who have been employed more than 60 days without completed Orientation Checklist in personnel files. It was suggested that adjustment to reporting metrics be considered to specify additional details and rationale.

#### Regional Partners

- The CEO participated in an Update and Question & Answer session with the Senior Friendship Club, providing updates on DRDH activities including medical recruitment, primary care, long-term care development and hospice planning. Feedback was received to support development of both the LTC Care Philosophy as well as to help inform community engagement expectations regarding hospice planning.
- The organization hosted a successful Take Our Kids to Work Day on November 5. Invitations had been opened to any Grade 9 students interested in healthcare, regardless of affiliation with DRDH. 5 students participated in a variety of activities across the organization including the laboratory, dietary, and nursing departments.
- The leadership team has engaged with the Robbie Dean Family Counseling Centre in Pembroke as well as our Ontario Health Team to host a local mental health planning day, focusing on service gaps in Deep River catchment area. The day will be hosted at DRDH and bring together both health, social and emergency service partners to identify potential system approaches to improving access to mental health care.