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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hospitals announce intention to amalgamate and create a new organization

[NORTH BAY November 12, 2009] The North Bay General Hospital (NBGH) and Northeast Mental Health Centre (NEMHC) Boards today announced the intent to amalgamate these hospitals into one new organization that will provide acute health services to North Bay and surrounding area and specialized mental health services to the region of northeast Ontario. It was acknowledged by both Boards that this process will take time and involve input from many stakeholders. The goal is to be one organization within three years.

The NBGH and NEMHC Boards agreed that the quality of care for the patient should be at the centre of amalgamation as they move forward together in the creation of a new organization.

Phil Geden, chair of the NBGH Board stated, "We have excellent staff at both organizations who deliver high quality services to patients and it is our job to make sure that they have the working environment and resources to do the best job they can. There are legal and legislative implications that need to be dealt with and we need to work closely with the NE LHIN and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to make this amalgamation successful. We have been working together with NEMHC as our partner for many years in the development of our new health centre. From the Boards' and senior staffs' perspectives it is agreed amalgamation will build a strong, new organization equipped to deal with the future management of the health centre and ensure the best possible patient care is available across the complete mental health and acute care spectrum," added Geden.

Chair of the NEMHC Board, Mary Tasz agreed. "Amalgamation will create one Board, one senior team and build a positive work environment for our professional and non-clinical staff and volunteers. It will help us further develop an organizational culture that meets the health needs of patients from physical health to mental health. We commit to ensuring our regional mandate continues to be in the forefront as this planning process proceeds. We believe that our staff will

agree that coming together as one organization creates a host of opportunities to build the best possible service for our patients and their families.”

The North Bay General Hospital and the Northeast Mental Health Centre have been working as partners to build the new North Bay Regional Health Centre for the past 10 years (a directive of the Health Services Restructuring Commission, 1999). The new facility is scheduled to be open on January 30, 2011.

For several years now, in preparation for the move into the new health centre, both NBGH and NEMHC have been jointly managing a growing list of support services and departments between the two organizations i.e. Information Systems, Food and Nutrition Services, Environmental Services, Public Relations, Pharmacy Services, etc., and continue to look at further integration.

Both Boards recognize the importance of change management, particularly in the blending of two organizational cultures. It was acknowledged as essential that they honour the past, retain corporate memory and respect differences in culture, while mutually looking ahead to the evolution of a new combined culture.

Precedent, where one organization provides acute care services to a city/district and specialized mental health services to a more regional geographic area, already exists in the province i.e. St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton.

For further information please contact the Public Relations Department, a joint service between NBGH and NEMHC, at 705-495-8127.

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