

# Health Sciences North 2024 Annual Meeting

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Report from the President & CEO  
**David McNeil**



Health Sciences North  
Horizon Santé-Nord

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**Annual General Meeting – June 12, 2024**

Good evening, Aanii, bonsoir.

Thank you for joining us tonight.

I want to begin by saying what an honour it is to serve as the President and CEO of this exceptional hospital. HSN is truly a gem and it fills me with pride to be with you to deliver my first report at our Annual Meeting.

To everyone on Team HSN, which includes our employees, Medical Staff, volunteers, and learners, we couldn't have accomplished so much over the last year without your hard work and determination.

I'd like to reflect on just some of the remarkable achievements of our teams over the last year.

- In October, HSN officially opened the 52-bed Acute and Reactivation Care Centre (ARCC). The goal of this Centre is to reverse or stabilize a decline in health status, and help older patients regain their independence. The new Centre has been designed so that older adults get the right care in the right place with a clinical team that has expertise in how to best treat their health needs.
- The Shirley and Jim Fielding Northeast Cancer Centre continued to be ranked as one of the top performing cancer centres in all of Ontario. The team received numerous awards for their work in addressing wait times for radiation, tobacco cessation programs, and cancer screening. With Ontario's Cancer Program considered the best in North America, we consider the team at HSN as being world-class.
- HSN's Addictions Medicine Unit (AMU) was awarded a Leading Practice by Health Standards Organization. This designation is awarded to organizations who exemplify innovation and patient-centred approaches to care. The first of its kind in Canada, the AMU helps patients who are admitted to hospital for medical reasons and who also suffer from a substance use issue. More than 1,500 patients have been cared for in the AMU since it opened in 2021.
- On June 4<sup>th</sup>, HSN joined 23 other hospitals in Northeastern Ontario and implemented a new Electronic Medical Record to better serve patients and families.
- Through a collaboration with the Joint Department of Medical Imaging (JDMI), the proportion of medical imaging read by sub-specialty radiologists has gone up from 20% in 2019 to over 80% today. This means reliable diagnostic imaging, shorter wait times in the Emergency Department, a reduced length of stay for inpatients, and quicker answers for outpatients.

- We continued to progress on our journey to be socially accountable. We signed into a collaborative agreement with Maamwesying North Shore Community Health Services Inc., as a core partner of the Maamwesying Ontario Health Team. This agreement is aimed at transforming healthcare for Indigenous peoples by embracing their unique cultural knowledge, traditional practices, medicines and improving access and awareness of Indigenous Health Services available in the North East.
- We improved access to culturally safe care with voluntary self-identification for First Nations, Métis and Inuit patients and families. This change to the registration system will mean patients have more access to the broad range of culturally safe programs and services available at HSN. Identifying as Indigenous will allow patients to connect quickly with Indigenous Patient Navigators who can provide additional support at treatment and clinic visits, help navigate the circle of care back to home hospital, travel arrangements and much more.
- An Indigenous Health Advisory Council was established in partnership with Indigenous people's in the North East to collectively lead wholistic, culturally relevant and safe services to reduce health inequities and improve health outcomes. This 17-member council held its first meeting on October 20, 2023 and is working collaboratively to guide HSN's Indigenous health strategy.
- We formed a new Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Anti-Racism (IDEAA) Committee. The first meeting took place on January 18<sup>th</sup> and saw the diverse assembly of 17 members, representing a spectrum of intersectional identities. The formation of the IDEAA Committee marks a significant step forward for our commitment to social accountability and to becoming a more inclusive organization.
- HSN also launched its new Francophone Advisory Committee in April 2023 to provide expert guidance to Hospital leadership on matters concerning the planning, capacity, and delivery of French-language services. The committee is made up of a diverse group of 17 members from HSN, Francophone organizations, and patients and families from the communities we serve.
- We were again ranked as one of Canada's Top 40 Research Hospitals. Through strong partnerships with NOSM University, Laurentian University, Collège Boréal and Cambrian College, more than 2,900 learner placements occurred at HSN as we train the next generation of healthcare workers.
- Through a partnership with the City of Greater Sudbury and supported by community partners, HSN is providing support for individuals experiencing homelessness who also struggle with mental health and addictions concerns through the city's Lorraine Street Affordable Housing Project, which aims to expand from 13 units to 40 units by 2025. This service brings together experts, including psychiatrists, physicians, nurses, social workers and substance use support workers who work side by side with residents providing ongoing support to improve wellness, build community connections and advance permanent housing goals.

- HSN recruited a total of 977 new employees during the last fiscal year, while 512 left the organization – 1.91 new employees for every employee who left. This includes 238 registered nurses, registered practical nurses and nurse practitioners.

These are just some of the important accomplishments that we celebrated this year thanks to the hard work of our teams.

I'd also like to reflect on the following challenges facing our organization:

This year we saw record high occupancy as we continue to deal with chronic overcrowding. In February, we saw a record 621 admitted patients in a hospital built for 441. Hallway healthcare is the daily reality for our teams, patients and families. In March of this year, we averaged 92 patients per day in unconventional spaces like overflow units, tub rooms, storage closets and hallways. Our Emergency Department is too small for the patients we serve. Most mornings, we have 28 patients waiting to be admitted to a bed by 7:00 AM, before the day even starts. We need to grow to meet the current and future healthcare needs of this region.

HSN remains in good financial shape. Inclusive of ongoing Bill 124 expenses, inflationary expenses, ongoing investments in digital initiatives, and depreciation for buildings, HSN recorded a bottom-line deficit of \$348K, representing an improvement from the previous fiscal year where HSN recorded a deficit of \$14.1M inclusive of unfunded Bill 124 expenses.

The MyHSN Optimization Oversight Committee has been meeting since the beginning of January 2024. Its focus has been on stabilizing the current payroll system, ensuring that there is a plan for integration of MyHSN into Meditech Expanse, developing an Optimization Plan, and identifying the ongoing operating costs and budget for MyHSN for the fiscal year 2024-2025. The payroll system has reached a fairly stable state with the number of payroll inquiries per pay cycle averaging approximately 110 in 2023 and 98 in 2024 year-to-date. This is better than the previous rate of approximately 180 inquiries per pay cycle prior to the implementation of MyHSN. Effective May 3, 2024, we have completed reconciling 7,656 payroll inquiries from the original backlog of inquiries, representing a 95.8% completion rate. We have 338 of the legacy inquiries remaining to be resolved. All new inquiries are generally resolved within the pay cycle period. Senior Leadership and Administrative Directors have reviewed the MyHSN optimization plan for the fiscal year 2024-2025. The cost of this optimization plan has been estimated at \$563,000, which is included in the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget.

While we have made strides in hiring; our turnover rate is at 11%. It's lower than last year and moving in the right direction, but we want to see this between 5 and 8%.

As we continue to face these challenges, we are also looking ahead to the future.

Plans are underway for HSN and HSNRI's next Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. There have been many meaningful discussions and consultations both internally with our teams and externally in the community. We expect to launch our new Strategic Plan in March 2025.

This year we saw good progress on addressing HSN's capital expansion needs.

Ontario's Minister of Health and Deputy Premier, Sylvia Jones, came to HSN in the fall to congratulate everyone involved with launching the ARCC, while also officially announcing a one-time capital planning grant of \$5,000,000 to support early planning of HSN's future capital expansion project to support patient care for the next 30 years. It was the second visit to HSN by Ontario's Health Minister in the last year. We're looking forward to hosting her again in the future.

The Board of Directors approved the Stage 1.2 submission for Phase 1 of the redevelopment of HSN at its June 2024 meeting. There remains much work to be done.

The Phase 1 agreement provided \$5M for HSN to refresh its 2019 submission to the Ministry of Health. The project scope for Phase 1 includes:

- NEO Kids (Northeastern Ontario Kids) Acute and Mental Health
- Adult Inpatient Mental Health and Addiction beds
- Emergency Department Redevelopment with Mental Health and Addictions space
- Adult Acute Inpatient beds
- Focus on chronic and core diseases and risk factors impacting adults and children
- Alignment with the Ministry of Health priorities

We also had the pleasure of hosting other provincial officials over the last year to discuss HSN's capital expansion. This included a visit by Deputy Minister of Health, Deborah Richardson, Assistant Deputy Minister of Health Dr. Karima Velji and Assistant Deputy Minister of Hospitals and Capital, Catherine Wang. We look forward to sharing more news about our capital expansion plans later this year.

We will need the support of our patients and families, donors and communities if we are to deliver on plans to expand our hospital to meet the healthcare needs of the North East.

As we move into the next stages of planning, we will have a better sense of the total project costs and the required community share.

In closing, I want to thank colleagues from the Senior Leadership Committee for their tireless efforts in the past year: Natalie Aubin, Dr. Pankaj Bhatia, Jessica Diplock, Anthony Keating, Mark Hartman, Kelli-Ann Lemieux, Max Liedke, Dr. Grace Ma, Debbie McQuarrie, Dr. Robert Ohle, Julie Trpkovski, Crystal Pitfield and Paul Truscott.

We have a remarkable team across the organization that provides exceptional, compassionate care and hope for the people of Northeastern Ontario. This update is their update. And I thank all our partners and supporters for helping to make these achievements possible.

Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Chi-Miigwech.