

Health Sciences North 2026 Annual Meeting

Report from the Board Chair
Tom Laughren

Hello. Bonjour. Aanii.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present this report for the past year and to reflect on the important work undertaken in support of our organization, our patients, and the communities we serve across Northeastern Ontario.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the passion and commitment of the Board Members who have served over the past year:

- Grace Alcaide Janicas
- Dr. Pankaj Bhatia
- Helen Bobiwash
- Dr. Matt Cavanagh
- Dr. Catherine Cervin
- Marc Despatie
- Tammy Eger
- Francesca Grosso
- Chris Leduc
- Chantal Makela
- Miriam McDonald
- David McNeil
- Louise Paquette
- Michel Paulin
- Stephan Plante
- Dr. Ravi Singh
- Lisa Smith
- Pamela Williamson
- Shayne Wisniewski

I would also like to recognize the strong leadership of David McNeil, President and CEO, Dr. Pankaj Bhatia, Chief of Staff, the Senior Leadership Team, and all of our physicians, staff, volunteers, and learners.

HSN is Northeastern Ontario's regional specialized referral centre and research institute, providing advanced care to more than 557,000 people across 300,000 square kilometres. As an academic health sciences centre, we are committed to excellence in patient care, education, and research, while helping train the next generation of healthcare professionals. We provide care in both French and English, ensuring services are accessible, respectful, and culturally responsive—from before birth to end of life. This broad mandate makes HSN an essential part of the healthcare system across the region.

Clinical teams at HSN are making an impact on the lives of patients everyday. HSN's Children's Treatment Centre introduced new clinics to help kids move better and eat more easily—two of the most common challenges we see. Last year, close to 500 children were waiting for these services. By adding these new clinics, that number has dropped to fewer than 90 children waiting for care.

HSN is helping more people get the right care in the right place. In partnership with Greater Sudbury Police, the Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team pairs police officers with mental health clinicians to provide immediate on-scene intervention for individuals experiencing mental health or addiction crises. This service helped divert roughly 1,100 people from the Emergency Department, while also reducing an estimated 5,000 policing hours.

HSN is working with 23 regional hospital partners to support faster access to care for patients through the launch of our Northeast Central Intake Diagnostic Imaging Hub. We're centralizing referrals to improve equitable and efficient access to specialised medical imaging to people get the right care in the right place at the right time, all close to home.

The Board's role is to provide strong governance, oversee financial stewardship, and support the long-term sustainability of the organization. Above all, we work to safeguard access to safe, high-quality care.

Over the past fiscal year, the Board held five regular meetings, one special meeting, and one formal education session. In addition, seven standing committees met regularly, with approximately 40 committee meetings focused on areas such as quality, finance, audit, governance, and long-range planning.

We also heard directly from key partners, including the Patient and Family Advisory Council, the HSN Foundation, the Volunteer Association, and Ontario Health North, while continuing our own development in areas such as strategic planning and quality oversight.

Since the last Annual Meeting, the Board has made important decisions related to:

- Capital Redevelopment
- Executive performance evaluation
- The 2025–2030 Strategic Plan
- Enhancements to the whistleblowing process
- New clinical services, including Palliative Care, MAiD, and General Internal Medicine
- Redevelopment to support Withdrawal Management Services
- Patient food managed services

Like hospitals across Ontario, HSN continues to operate in a challenging environment. Demand for care remains high, costs are rising, and workforce and infrastructure pressures persist—often more acutely in Northern Ontario due to geography and access to services. Throughout the year, the Board remained focused on supporting HSN in responding to these pressures while maintaining high-quality care. We regularly reviewed financial and quality performance, risk, and capital planning, working closely with leadership to support responsible decision-making for both current and future needs.

A key area of focus has been financial sustainability. While we recognize recent government investments, funding has not kept pace with increasing demand and rising costs. Strong financial stewardship remains essential to maintaining services and planning for the future. Hospitals also play a critical role as community anchors—supporting jobs, attracting talent, advancing research, and contributing to economic growth. HSN is the largest employer in Northeastern Ontario, with an estimated \$1.4 billion annual impact on the provincial economy. Our continued growth, including capital expansion, is closely tied to the region's future, including opportunities linked to mining and the critical minerals strategy.

Advocacy remains an important part of our work. Over the past year, I participated in discussions with government representatives, sector partners, and regional organizations to help ensure the needs of HSN and Northern Ontario are well understood. We continue to appreciate the good relationship we have with the provincial government and Ministry of Health.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge that community support and philanthropy are key to HSN's success. It's important we recognize the exceptional work of the HSN Foundation. Donors play a vital role in patient care, helping keep services close to home. Over the past year, their support has contributed to pediatric critical care capacity, improved medical imaging for cancer care, and upgrades to the Medical Device Reprocessing Department through the FDC Foundation.

Thank you to my fellow Board members for their dedication and thoughtful leadership. Most importantly, thank you to our physicians, staff, volunteers, learners, donors, and community partners. Your commitment makes HSN's work possible. While challenges remain, the Board is confident in the strength of this organization and optimistic about the future. We remain committed to strong governance, responsible stewardship, and continued advocacy to ensure outstanding care for generations to come.