

April CEO Blog

It Takes a Community: *Health care is strongest when it is based in community*

April 6, 2025

Timmins is known as a city with a heart of gold. For anyone who has spent time here, it's clear that it is a special place, and that the moniker goes beyond what's in the ground. For a city on the smaller side, at some 44,000 people, it has a supersized heart.

This month we celebrate how partnerships and people in the communities we serve, including volunteers, are working to strengthen health care. One of our Timmins and District Hospital (TADH) strategic priorities is to improve the patient experience, and we can't do this on our own. We know that it takes a community to make this happen.

Partners Pulling Together

On April 2, diverse partners came together to celebrate a contribution from Agnico Eagle Mines of \$600,000 to our **Timmins Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee**. The amount, together with matching contributions by the City of Timmins and TADH, now totals \$1.8 million. With this milestone reached, we can leap forward to the next goal of recruiting up to **30 physicians** over the **next three years** by offering start-up grants of \$60,000 each.

The amount of increased care that will be provided to the people of Timmins and District is invaluable. Our recruitment strategy, combined with this funding, will put us well on track to attract the physicians and specialists our community needs.

Health care extends well beyond a hospital's walls. Without clinicians and the ability to provide care as close to where people live as possible, the local health care system is fragmented. Achieving this recruitment goal helps ensure our local health care continuum is intact so that everyone can access care when they need it.

We know that this reality would not be possible without a partnership approach and strong working relationships between the hospital, private, and public sectors, as well as the many individuals who roll up their sleeves to make healthy change happen every day.

Many partners are working across the district working to improve health care for Northerners, connecting care, and supporting each other. At a system level the [Equipe Santé Ontario Cochrane District Ontario Health Team](#) represents the partnership of 15+ organizations, including TADH, collaborating to solve system wide challenges. We are thankful for these partnerships and know that together we will make a difference.

Volunteers and Improving the Patient Experience

This month also marks **National Volunteer Week** and **Patient Experience Week**, starting April 28. As a hospital, we see these two weeks as closely related for a variety of reasons.

Did you know that during the 2024-2025 fiscal year, **115** donated more than **2,570 hours** to help patients, families and visitors here at Timmins and District Hospital?

Volunteers include people like Nathalie Chaput who offers her time three times a week throughout TADH with her golden retriever Maui. She's giving back in her retirement knowing that the hospital helped her battle breast cancer 25 years ago when she was pregnant with her daughter (who incidentally now works in Delivery as a TADH registered nurse). Nathalie knows what's its like to sit in the oncology waiting room and wants to make the experience better for patients waiting here today.

Often, when we think about volunteers, we picture someone who is in their retirement, giving back, like Chaput. But we also have volunteers who are at the beginning of their journey. **Student volunteers, "our next generation,"** are looking ahead to future careers perhaps in health care; their time with us shaping their future decisions. Whatever their backgrounds or experiences, all of our volunteers are working to enhance the quality of care offered in our hospital.

Volunteers are integral members of a patient's care team from bringing comfort to people undergoing dialysis to helping elderly patients regain mobility and enjoy social connection to providing newborns with essential "cuddles and snuggles."

Our volunteers can be found **throughout the hospital**:

- providing guidance and greeting to visitors at the front entrance;
- helping patients in Fracture Clinics, Urology clinics, Dialysis unit, and Medical units;
- supporting patients through the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) and in the nursery;
- providing spiritual and emotional care through Pastoral Care Services;
- and offering pet therapy through St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs.

We are also so thankful for the volunteers who help steer **decision-making** at the hospital through our [Board of Directors](#) and provide feedback on our services and care delivery through our [Patient and Family Advisory Committee](#), our [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Social Accountability and Anti-racism Committee](#), our [Indigenous Advisory Committee](#) and our [French Language Services Committee](#). Their hours are not tracked with other volunteers but they are vital in shaping the work we do.

Volunteers are also supporting the hospital through **fundraising** efforts including through the [TADH Foundation Board](#) and auxiliary. The work of the [TADH Foundation](#) through staff and many volunteers is so vital to supporting the needs of our hospital.

We are planning a special [Volunteer Appreciation Celebration](#) on April 29, to commemorate these incredible contributions by our volunteers.

If you are a volunteer, I hope to see you there, and I thank you for the incredible gift of your time and experience!