North Shore Health Network
Réseau Santé Rive Nord

525 Causley Street
Blind River, ON P0R 1B0
PH: 705-356-2265
FX: 705-356-1220

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release October 8, 2026

NSHN Board Provides Update on Future Healthcare Infrastructure Planning

At its September 29 meeting, the North Shore Health Network (NSHN) Board of Directors endorsed, in principle, a future planning direction that includes:

1. Planning a new hospital facility to serve the western portion of the NSHN catchment area, including Thessalon, St. Joseph Island and communities along the highway 17 corridor to Echo Bay; and
2. Renovating and modernizing the Blind River hospital site.

This is a planning direction only. It is not a final decision or commitment. The Board will make further decisions after receiving and reviewing the final report from Agnew Peckham Health Care & Facility Planners (Agnew Peckham), an Ontario healthcare planning firm with more than 70 years of experience supporting hospitals and healthcare organizations with strategic planning, service planning, and redevelopment projects.

Since being engaged by NSHN, Agnew Peckham has been reviewing population trends, healthcare needs, facility conditions, and long-term planning opportunities across our region. Their independent assessment will help guide the Board's decisions about the future of healthcare infrastructure on the North Shore.

The information reviewed so far suggests that a two-site model may be the best way to provide safe, sustainable healthcare services for our communities in the years ahead. Preliminary findings indicate that a single new hospital serving the western portion of the NSHN catchment area is the most practical and sustainable option. This direction is also consistent with feedback from local physicians.

This approach aims to:

1. Maintain access to hospital services across the North Shore.
2. Address challenges with aging facilities.
3. Support future healthcare needs.
4. Provide a practical path for long-term hospital renewal.

The Board also recognizes that new hospital projects in Ontario must go through a detailed Ministry of Health capital planning process. Having a clear planning direction helps NSHN prepare for future discussions with the Ministry and positions the organization for potential capital investment opportunities.

The Board understands that many people care deeply about the future of healthcare in our region and are eager to help move this work forward. We appreciate that support and passion for local healthcare. As planning continues, it is important that activities related to hospital redevelopment are coordinated through NSHN so that we can work together with one voice and follow the Ministry of Health planning process.

The Board looks forward to reviewing the final Agnew Peckham report and will use its recommendations to help guide the next phase of planning for healthcare infrastructure across our region.

The Board remains committed to keeping our communities informed as this work continues and appreciates the ongoing support and interest of residents across the region.

Questions About the Future of Healthcare Infrastructure?

NSHN has created an online Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section to help keep communities informed and answer questions about hospital planning and redevelopment. Community members are encouraged to submit their questions, which will be reviewed and answered as information becomes available.

Visit **nshn.care/future** to learn more and submit your questions.

-30-

For further information, contact:
Melanie Kubatlija,
Chief Communications Officer
mkubatlija@nshn.care