

# **St. Francis Memorial Hospital News Release**

## **SFMH aims to maintain programs and services; no staff cuts planned**

A new staffing model under study at St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay is aimed at improving care and services for patients, while maintaining present nurse staffing levels.

Dorothy Corbeil, SFMH Board Chair, says the hospital has had a shortage of registered nurses in recent years. To alleviate the situation, senior management has been working with the Ontario Nurses Association and Ontario Public Service Employees Union to find solutions that will ensure excellent care for patients, as well as a healthy and efficient working environment for nursing staff.

"We clearly recognize the importance of nursing staff in the delivery of quality care to our patients," stresses Joan Kuiack, SFMH Director of Nursing, adding that no staff cuts are planned. SFMH has reviewed the staffing models of peer hospitals, Kuiack says, while referring to the College of Nurses of Ontario staff mix framework to determine the skill set required at the hospital.

With a shortage of registered nurses in hospitals across Ontario, many hospitals have implemented new, mixed staffing models, Corbeil says. These staffing models maximize available human resources while ensuring optimal patient care.

Corbeil stresses that no final decisions have been made about a new staffing model. "But any changes will be aimed at maintaining programs and services for the optimum care of our patients," she says. "Certainly, there is no plan for downsizing, and there is no financial issue at SFMH at this time." Any model being considered has been utilized in peer hospitals she adds. "We do not propose anything that has not been done successfully in other hospitals."

"These models could include different use of all of our nursing staff to maximize their skill sets. Overall, we are looking and will continue to look at models that will allow us to maintain our programs," Kuiack adds.

Dr. Jason Malinowski, SFMH Chief of Staff, cites the incredibly talented and loyal staff as one of the reasons for the hospital's success. "Maintaining our ability to provide excellent care for our patients is among our medical staff's highest priorities. I'm very pleased that the hospital is trying to achieve this through strategic redeployment of our valuable nursing staff, rather than reducing their numbers."

Anyone who has questions or suggestions is encouraged to contact Joan Kuiack at 613-756-3044.

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**For Immediate Release – February 12, 2015**