



Report from Matt Simeoni Chair, Board of Directors – April 7, 2021

Last month marked one year since the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic. As I reflect on the past year, my thoughts turn, of course, to our Hospital's front line, professional, and hospital staff. Confronted with a new and unknown disease, health care staff faced and continue to face an immense emotional, professional and personal burden. On behalf of the Board and the communities we serve, I want to recognize and thank all front line, professional, and hospital staff who continue to make sacrifices and work tirelessly to keep our community healthy and safe.

I would also like to recognize and thank our colleagues in public health. Our partners at the TBDHU have played a critical role in the community's response to this pandemic, and I am grateful for their hard work and ongoing commitment in keeping our communities informed and healthy. If there is another positive that we take from the past year, it is how our community health care organizers have shown how they can mobilize and work together for the betterment and wellbeing of our communities.

National Volunteer Week (April 18-24) is celebrated each year and offers a time to reflect on the generosity of the many individuals who choose to give of their time, skills, and energy to this Hospital. Thank you to all of the Hospital's Volunteers and Patient Family Advisors and Foundation Volunteers. We miss you and are eagerly looking forward to the day our volunteers can safely return to supporting patients and staff while contributing to patient and family centred care here in this Hospital.

Finally, I would also like to recognize the dedicated volunteers who serve the Hospital as members of the Board of Directors. Each of you has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to support excellent, safe, and high-quality health care for the people of Northwestern Ontario. We received an overwhelming response from many strong and qualified candidates during our recent push to recruit new volunteers to serve on the Board or its Committees. This response is a true reflection of the strong volunteering spirit in our region, and we look forward to the appointment and announcement of new members in June.

While I know we are still seeing a high level of cases in the community, I must acknowledge the optimism many of us have for 2021, knowing vaccinations are happening and our transition out of winter allows people to get outside safely. I encourage everyone to continue to follow public health and provincial directives on social distancing and wearing masks. We are doing well yet this is not a time to let our guards down. Our hope and optimism for the future depends on everyone doing their part throughout all of Northwestern Ontario.