

**Report of the Chair
Annual General Meeting 2021**

Although we are meeting virtually, we are physically located on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin First Nation. Let us proceed with respect for the Algonquin people, honouring their longstanding role as guardians of this land.

Welcome to my fellow Board members, representatives from our foundations and auxiliaries, LCMH and LCSS and guests

Another year with new challenges—at times the hospital was buffeted by the storm that was called COVID. I have often said what an honour and privilege it has been to serve through this hospital, a place where no one walks alone. Our greatest strength comes from our people—throughout the challenges of the storm, heads were held up high despite walking on through the rain and the wind (aka the waves of COVID)—our people gave so many others hope in their heart. And that is really what this hospital is all about to patients and their families: the Heart of Care. In the last few months patients and family members have reflected their experiences at our Board meetings—one who battled COVID and another, a family member facing end-of-life decisions. These reflections were particularly moving and enhanced our incredible pride in the compassionate and high-quality care provided through these extraordinary times.

COVID challenges persisted through 2020-21 and, as is everybody else, we are still waiting for the golden sky at the end of the storm. However, as you will hear from later reports, while COVID dominated the media coverage of health care, there have also been extraordinary efforts behind the scenes leading to significant progress on a number of other fronts: the joint health information system initiative, collaboration through the Ontario Health Team initiative to achieve a unique approach in our region and further development of a solid foundation towards meeting growing capital funding needs as well towards a more sustainable funding base for our medium-sized hospital base.

Health Information System

The foundation of health care is not just the buildings and the people who work there but also the technology. For PSFDH replacing the existing system, circa 1990 and well beyond its best before date, has been a key focus since I joined the Board. PSFDH is now on the threshold of moving into the next phase. With our 5 partner hospitals, we all share a common goal of an effective health information system—one that permits each patient to have one health record, health professionals to access information and to share records with other health care providers in a timely manner. The endless hours spent by clinicians and administrators from our hospital in reviewing and testing the capacity of the new system give us great expectations of success for this

huge step forward.

Collaboration

When we met last year, the hospital was supportive of two Ontario Health Team proposals to achieve better and more integrated care, but the initiative was on pause due to COVID. As the first wave pressures eased, the Ministry accepted the Leeds Grenville and Lanark Ontario Health Team proposal for development. Efforts were redoubled to fulfill the application requirements and under the steering group leadership of Dr. Guppy, a final plan was approved by the Ministry. The commitment of 50 other regional health care partners holds promise of further connections and collaboration to better serve our community.

Our unique role with our hospital sponsored partners, Lanark County Mental Health led by Rebecca Fromowitz, Executive Director, and Lanark County Support Services led by Heidi Bedor, Executive Director in addition to Lanark County Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, led within our organization by Maureen Mclead Frazer continue to make major contributions to our community and provide further experiences in collaboration that can only help in the context of broader collaboration initiatives.

Fiscal sustainability

A common theme through the years and a consistent challenge in health care generally. To PSFDH, the nature of the most recent provincial funding formula which disadvantaged medium-sized hospitals, a projected doubling of our capital costs over the decade-factoring in the acquisition of PSFDH's share of the new Health Information System, and a significant working capital deficit were specific challenges.

The hospital continued to engage with the public to articulate the challenges of funding capital equipment requirements—specifically, that these requirements are not covered by the province, but rather by the communities primarily through the foundation(s).

About 5 years ago, a working capital alliance among the hospital and the two foundations supporting our hospital: the Great War Memorial Foundation and the Smiths Falls Community Hospital Foundation was formed to explore new opportunities. This cooperative effort evolved into a new framework anchored by merger of the two foundations into the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital Foundation and a strengthened relationship between the hospital and Foundation. To reinforce this relationship, the Foundation Chair is now a member of the Hospital Board and both the CEO and a delegate from the Hospital Board sit on the Foundations Board.

It is only fitting that while we could not celebrate the 25-year anniversary of the amalgamation of the Perth and Smiths Falls hospitals in person, we could mark the occasion one year later with this union. So many were involved in this successful union: Irv Mazurkiewicz who shepherded us assertively through the ups and downs, Bruce Rigby and Gardner Church from the Hospital Board, Paul Martin and Kathy Wickens in their successive roles as Chairs of the GWM Foundation, Sean Lawrence as Chair of the SF Foundation, and Margot Hallam as Executive Director, GWM and more importantly as project lead, as well as Lise Smith, ED SFF.

Although fundraising efforts are generally directed by the foundation, prior to the merger, the

Core Capital Program working group of the Board oversaw the interface with our municipal partners which included regular presentations and requests to councils. Two of our Board members, John Fenik, Mayor of Perth and Shawn Pankow, Mayor of Smiths Falls led the way, not only achieving commitments from their own municipalities, but also in the original outreach, making presentations to their peers. We now have 7 municipalities who have committed to a stronger future for our hospital with significant contributions. (Perth, Smiths Falls, Tay Valley, Lanark County, United Counties of L&G, Drummond North Elmsley and Rideau Lakes). To all of these stakeholders and partners we are extremely grateful.

The Future

The fiscal sustainability challenges are not limited to capital equipment requirements but also to operating requirements and working capital deficits so going forward we do not expect the topic of fiscal sustainability to move off the list of top priorities.

In response to COVID, we extended the existing strategic plan to 2022 so that the important stepping stones including the appropriate stakeholder engagement, analysis and involvement of PSFDH's leadership, management, staff and physicians, towards a fulsome plan that incorporated the lessons from COVID could be undertaken once immediate pressures eased. The priorities of patient and family experience, sustainability, quality and safety and engagement continued to anchor our decision-making process. And in January we had a virtual weekend retreat with the Board, physicians and senior leadership to reinvigorate the visioning and planning process for the renewal of Strategic Plan, expected to be completed in this calendar year.

Overall, we can look back on the past year as one in which significant progress has been made despite the uncertainties and challenges and this is because of the commitment of so many involved with our hospital;

Our leaders

Barry Guppy: The confidence the Board has had in the leadership of Dr. Barry Guppy has been validated on so many fronts over the last two years. His broad and extensive experience in the health care sector, his successful engagement with partners and funders outside of the hospital, his leadership through the pandemic, ensuring the safety and quality of our people and patients bring us to a good place to embark on a new and exciting vision for the future. While he has recently announced that he will be joining Health Canada in late summer (our loss, Canada's gain as one of my fellow Board members said), his commitment to the future success of PSFDH is clearly strong, as I continue to get emails at 3 am on various pressing issues.

Dr. Kate Stolee, Chief of Staff, is the chief conduit between the Board and the hospital's physicians—but she is much more than that. I have watched over the last 4-5 years as she has developed a professional framework in fulfilling the Chief of Staff roles and responsibilities, introducing consistency and transparency in approach, supporting her colleagues on the Senior Leadership Team, working many more hours than her commitments to help ensure that the clinical requirements of the new Health information system were achieved and renewing the Professional Staff Bylaws.

Nancy Shaw, the Chief Nursing Executive, Vice President, Clinical Services and Chief of HR—as you

can see by her title she has broad reaching responsibilities and often works under the radar. Like Kate, she has made a significant contribution to helping to ensure that the health information system will meet our unique needs at the time of implementation.

Diane Hodgins, our VP Finance and CFO clearly hit the ground running when she started with PSFDH less than a year ago—recreating a corporate financial foundation in a time of funding uncertainty—both from the perspective of COVID funding, but also changing direction from the Ministry. She has kept us informed and conscious of risks—we are so lucky to have her as part of our Senior Leadership Team.

Each of these individuals were actively engaged in future plans as well as the ever-evolving the COVID response.

But the active engagement did not stop with them—this unwavering commitment extended to the Management team and to the physicians, who helped brainstorm new and creative measures while aligning with the steady stream of directives from the province. Overall, the commitment of our people whether it be in housekeeping, infrastructure, administration, clinical services, to our patients and families is second to none.,

And this commitment is shared by the volunteers who are willing to provide endless hours and effort and were frustrated by the inability to do so, and to our patients, who advise on multiple issues.

While the face-to-face participation of our volunteers was thwarted, many worked behind the scenes in different ways—for example, the November 11 blanket of poppies that draped the entrance to the Perth site.

Although our auxiliaries, headed by Marilyn Young and Jackie Staples in Perth and Smiths Falls respectively, have been limited in their role, their commitment has remained strong as they continue to financially support the hospital in new and creative ways.

Patients and families give us feedback on their experience, both positive and maybe not so positive, helping us to continuously improve—some participate as members of our Patient and Family Advisory Committee and in term to our Board and its committees, grounding the Board's perspective in what really matters.

The final group of volunteers that I would like to acknowledge are my fellow Board members. Although the complexion of the Board of Directors of PSFDH has changed over the years, it has been a consistently strong, committed group of individuals with a breadth of skills and experience at the table--governing the hospital through monitoring, oversight and planning for the future. It has been a privilege to work with them as they are willing to challenge conventional thinking, to ask the important questions, to work long hours and help each other along the way. Their collective wisdom makes me confident in the future governance of this organization. And while I don't normally single out individuals, I need to thank Gardner for being consistently available during some particularly challenging times this past winter to act as a sounding board and provider of perspective!

I would like to welcome Kathy Wickens, as Chair of the Perth and Smiths Falls Foundation, to the Board of Directors—your always thoughtful perspective will only enhance our partnership efforts to reinforce the fiscal position of the hospital and to develop clear and consistent messaging in our community funding initiatives.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the ongoing contributions of departed members of our Board who are now my role models for my pending life after the Board:

- Bruce Rigby who was the behind the scenes coordinator of many of the capital raising initiatives, including the Capital Alliance and the Municipal Campaign and is now a member of the new foundation.
- Wayne Johnson, who has supported many of our human resource challenges and in fact has provided me with sage advice and continues to do so,
- Cheryl Beckett who extended her legal expertise over the 4 years post Board, to support the modernization and review of our corporate and Professional Staff By-laws (and is now on the new foundation.)

Finally, I would like to take a moment to thank Karen Kelly who, through these interesting 5 years, has been the continuity supporting the Board and Senior management—a trusted confidant and shepherd through various hospital and Board commitments. As we all know, today wouldn't happen without her.

I continue to reflect on the strength and compassion of the people and groups who shape and have shaped this hospital--our leaders, our physicians, our people, our volunteers, our foundations and auxiliaries, our patients, our partners and our community-- so it can continue to advance through changing times to provide exceptional care. We do not walk alone.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Howard
Chair, Board of Directors

You'll Never Walk Alone

*When you walk through a storm
Hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark.
At the end of the storm
There's a golden sky
And the sweet silver sound of the lark*

*Walk on through the wind
Walk on through the rain
Though your dreams be tossed and blown
Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone.*

Rodgers and Hammerstein