



To our community,

Six months ago, I stepped into the role of President and CEO of Haliburton Highlands Health Services. Returning to the Highlands, the place where my wife, Victoria, and I grew up, went to school, and where we now have the privilege of raising our children, has been incredibly meaningful.

I have always known our community to be resilient. But spending these past six months listening to you—our staff, physicians, volunteers, patients, residents, families, partners, and community members, has given me an even deeper sense of pride in our community and excitement about what the future of healthcare can look like here in the Haliburton Highlands.

I want to thank all of you for the warm welcome and for the candid and constructive conversations we have shared. Thank you to the many people across our community who generously give their time, support our programs and services, and contribute to the purchase of much-needed equipment. And thank you to our almost 400 team members, whose dedication, passion, and commitment are evident each and every day as they serve our community.

When I stepped into this role, my first priority was to listen, learn, and build on our strengths. Thanks to the dedication of our exceptional frontline staff, physicians, volunteers, Foundation partners, and community partners, we have made significant progress together over the past six months:

- We are expanding access to care across Haliburton County through the launch of mobile community wellness clinics, which began in September alongside our partners at the County. I firmly believe that where you live in our county should not determine which programs and services you can access. This initiative reflects our commitment to breaking down barriers and bringing accessible, preventative healthcare directly to rural residents.
- We have expanded access to cancer screening through the launch of the Ontario Breast Screening Program and, with our system partners, the Ontario Lung Screening Program—bringing important screening services closer to home for residents of Haliburton County.
- We continue to plan for the future of long-term and acute care through our master planning process, with a vision to expand Hyland Crest in Minden into a modern 160-bed long-term care home and expand the Haliburton hospital to 30 inpatient beds.
- We are investing in clinical excellence and innovation, including the implementation of the ED Virtual Simulation Education Program for our clinical teams and continued improvements to local diagnostic services. Through initiatives like these, we are consistently raising the bar for rural healthcare delivery.

These achievements have taken place while our clinical teams have faced significant pressures across the healthcare system, including patient volumes HHHS has never experienced before. During the final week of August, for example, our inpatient unit reached 187% occupancy.

When you work in a smaller community like ours, you are not simply serving patients— you are caring for your community. You are caring for family, friends, neighbours, and familiar faces. That takes a special



kind of dedication, and over these past six months, I have seen our teams demonstrate it time and again as they tirelessly step up to be there for you.

And while these are just some of the things we have accomplished together, I am even more excited about what lies ahead.

We recognize that Ontario's healthcare system is facing complex and systemic challenges. Within this demanding environment, we remain firmly focused on ensuring the long-term sustainability of HHHS while continuing to grow and strengthen the programs and services our community needs. That means making thoughtful decisions today that will keep HHHS resilient, financially sustainable, and responsive to our communities for decades to come. It also means continuing to reduce inequities in access to care across our vast rural region.

Our goal is not simply to maintain our local healthcare system. We want to reimagine what excellence in rural health can look like.

Over the coming months, we will complete our master plan and master program, providing a roadmap for the services our community will need in the future and the facilities and spaces required to deliver them. We will also begin engaging our community, our teams, physicians, partners, and other stakeholders in the development of HHHS's next strategic plan.

An important part of that work will be hearing directly from you. Later this fall, we are planning community engagement and town hall sessions in each of Haliburton County's four municipalities. Once dates and locations are confirmed, we will share more information about how you can participate.

Our incredible staff, physicians, and volunteers are the heartbeat of HHHS. Their dedication, combined with the tremendous support we receive from across our community, gives me great confidence in what we can accomplish together.

Thank you for trusting us with your care, for supporting our teams, and for partnering with us as we build the future of healthcare in the Haliburton Highlands.

The next chapter for HHHS is an exciting one. I look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside all of you as, together, we build a model of excellence in rural health.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Hutchison', is located below the text.

Jack Hutchison
President & Chief Executive Officer
Haliburton Highlands Health Services