

Local team recognized for mass vaccination clinics in North Hastings



BY CHRIS DROST Staff

The efforts of the North Hastings Hospital team in partnership with Hastings Prince Edward Public Health and the Bancroft Community Family Health Team in administering over 19,000 vaccines at the local mass vaccine clinics, were applauded during a presentation by Shelley Brown, program manager at HPEPH at the North Hastings hospital on March 25. The North Hastings Hospital Community Assessment Centre was also acknowledged for its work to help identify and slow the spread of COVID-19 through assessment and testing. The Bancroft Community Family Health Team welcomed the opportunity during the pandemic to work closely with our health care partners in delivering COVID-19 vaccinations to our community. We are especially grateful to Quinte Health Care - North Hastings, HPEPH, and all the physicians, staff and volunteers that assisted with the clinics. A special thank you to the Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 181 that brought this collaboration together by providing the space, says Sandra McGrath, executive director of the BCFHT. In a letter of thanks, Tammy Davis, Quinte Health Care North Hastings Hospital site lead and manager patient services, shared the success story behind the mass vaccination clinics in North Hastings.

The first mass COVID vaccination clinic was hosted by the North Hastings team on March 3, 2021, in the Corner Café in the Professional Building. Public Health staff trained and mentored the NHH team to support the development of an ongoing mass vaccination clinic. A month later, in collaboration with HPEPH and the BCFHT, the mass clinic started at the Bancroft Legion. A group of dedicated retired healthcare staff were hired to work at the clinic, screening, receiving, registering, drawing vaccine, administering, monitoring and checking vaccine recipients out. A group of Family Health Team staff and local family physicians worked at each clinic as well. After seeing how well organized, efficient and effective the local team was performing, HPEPH staff gave their blessing and were reassigned to support clinics elsewhere. The clinic continued to provide COVID vaccine to the community of North Hastings and its surrounding area until the final date of March 29. During its tenure, the vaccine clinic team offered vaccination to people age five and older who were eligible, administering up to four doses for those who needed them. The team travelled to homes, local schools, and set up outreach clinics in the local communities including Bancroft, Birds Creek, Cardiff, Coe Hill, Limerick, McArthur's Mills, Maynooth and Lake St Peter. In December, the vaccine clinic relocated back to the Fireside Room in the Professional Building by the hospital, for the final few months, while the BCFHT ran clinics in their local office. Having two separate locations provided the option of different dates for access, and the opportunity to utilize vaccine drawn in either clinic or at the hospital, in order to maximize the availability and avoid waste of the vaccine. The NHH Community Assessment Centre is staffed by local NHH clerical and nursing staff, some retired nurses who also worked at the vaccine clinic, and local rotating paramedics who were reassigned from Hastings Quinte Paramedic Services. Open five days per week, the CAC successfully provides PCR and RAT testing, with exceptional turnaround times for results. This is also thanks to George Smith our dedicated

courier, and the outstanding work by the QHC Microbiology Lab, analyzing swabs and reporting most results on the same day received. Moving forward, the local HPEPH and the BCFHT will continue to offer COVID vaccinations. The North Hastings vaccine clinic staff will remain available should the need for mass vaccine clinics arise again. The NHH CAC is continuing to offer service to the community, Monday to Friday, with hours being reduced to 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. effective April 1. We would like to thank all of the dedicated staff who came out of retirement to support these clinics, and those who were hired, or who took the time out of their existing work day, to plan and operate these clinics. It was a tremendous amount of planning and work, but the satisfaction and rewards from seeing a job well done, and a community well served has been more than worth it. A special thanks to Leslie Cox, administrative assistant, without whom we could not have done any of this. In her letter, Davis also offered special thanks to Dr. Carolyn Brown, physician lead NHCAC; Sandra McGrath, executive director BCFHT; Jocelyn Jan BCFHT; and Dr. Alex Ferreira, lead physician Vaccine Clinic. The vaccination team included the following dedicated individuals: Tammy Davis, RN manager; Leslie Cox, administrative assistant; Dorothy Anderson; Janice Barclay, RPN; Dr. Brian Bishop; Kim Bishop; Emma Cooper; Karen Cooper, RN; Peggy Donaldson; Chris Jenkins; Marilyn Kheidr; Becky Lalone; Anne Levia; Cathy Levia, RN; Janice Maxwell, RN; Cindy McAlpine, RN; John O'Donnell; Sharon Oram; Ardyth Tait; Kelly Taube, RN; Roseann Towes; and Elaine White, RN