

PEMBROKE REGIONAL HOSPITAL
Report from the President and CEO and Chief of Staff
January, 2026

Board Education Session

The Board welcomed Dr. Krishna Pulchan who joined Beth Brownlee in providing an overview of expanded services in our Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

President and CEO Report to Board

PRH Represented At Queen's Park

On November 20th, Mental Health Services Director Sarah Selle represented PRH at Queen's Park in Toronto as part of a delegation comprised of elected officials and senior staff from the County of Renfrew, in order to meet with provincial leaders and discuss a number of high-priority topics that affect Renfrew County Residents.

Organized by Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MPP Billy Denault, Sarah was able to meet with Associate Attorney General Michael Tibollo, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health John Jordan and Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Vijay Thanigasalam. She was able to highlight the work that is being done in Renfrew County to support individuals with mental health and substance use concerns, identify gaps in service and advocate for further support.

PRH Represented At First Ever Integrated Care Action Summit

On November 24th and 25th, I was honoured to be part of the first ever Integrated Care Action Summit that was held in Toronto and brought together 58 Ontario Health Team leaders to connect, share and collaborate with partners.

The two-day summit showcased practical examples of integrated care from across Ontario, with day one focused on ways integrated care is being advanced in communities, while day two featured interactive workshops as a way of showcasing local initiatives.

We also had the opportunity to hear from Dr. Jane Philpott who was appointed Chair of Ontario's Primary Care Action Team last December and given the mandate to ensure that everyone in Ontario is connected to primary care by 2029.

Advancing The Way We Address Truth And Reconciliation In Renfrew County

As you may recall, the Renfrew County Administrators' Group, comprised of leaders from both school boards, our hospital, the City of Pembroke, the County of Renfrew (which includes paramedic services and two Long Term Care homes), Family and Children's Services, and Algonquin College has been meeting fairly regularly for the past year and a half.

One of the group's learning objectives is Truth and Reconciliation.

On Nov 27th, leadership teams from the seven organizations came together to complete a third full-day dedicated session on Truth and Reconciliation and what we can do locally to advance work on this.

The day was very engaging as we discussed our use of space (indoors and out), how to make connections with Indigenous people and their culture more meaningful and less transactional, the use of acknowledgement statements, the involvement of voices and perspectives of Indigenous communities that are local and further away in PRH operations, and how we can work on the calls to action found in the Truth & Reconciliation Committee findings.

We came away with some concrete ideas on how to move forward.

Code Grey – Tower A

In early December we were once again challenged with a Code Grey – this one a failure of our underground infrastructure after pipes under the first floor of Tower A became blocked and caused back up into the floors above.

Following a thorough assessment of the situation, it was determined that the aging pipes required replacement, but only once the floors were opened up was the true extent of the damage to the entire pipeline in that area revealed.

The construction project necessitated excavation in our Administration corridor, our Chapel, part of our Tower A rotunda and the doctors' charting room, essentially blocking off the better part of two wings on Tower A's first floor. As a temporary measure, an area for prayer, meditation and reflection was relocated to the 2nd floor of Tower A, near the cafeteria.

While most repairs and the reopening of this area are anticipated to take place and be complete by the end of January, it was determined that there are additional issues with the piping that goes through Medical Records, the housekeeping areas behind that space and into areas of the Lab that will need to be addressed.

We anticipate work in those areas to begin next month and take approximately four to eight weeks to complete, depending on the state of the branches of piping that will be exposed during the project.

Tower C Main Entrance

Unanticipated work also had to be done in the Tower C entrance area as mold was discovered underneath the lobby flooring where we had some flooding last February. Thankfully, Mulvihill Drug Mart was not affected as they can be accessed from their other entrance. Final work in that area was anticipated to be finished in the last couple of weeks, with handover taking place sometime around the end of January.

Physician Shortages In The Emergency Department

In addition to scheduling challenges related to unfilled physician FTE positions in the ED, the last couple of months have been extremely challenging and taxing on our Emergency Department physician team compounded by last-minute sick calls.

Despite this, everyone has pulled together to support one another, maintain the schedule and ensure that our ED remain fully operational throughout the holiday period.

This remarkable level of teamwork and shared responsibility speaks volumes about the strength of our physician group and their unwavering commitment to patient care. Because of their collective efforts, essential emergency healthcare remained accessible close to home during a critical time.

One Million Canadian Hearts Initiative

The Ottawa Heart Institute has recently launched their “One Million Canadian Hearts” initiative to screen one million Canadians for cardiovascular disease risk factors. I’m excited to share that we are in preliminary discussions to support this initiative by hosting their mobile screening clinics. A lot more to come on this but it will be a great way to support heart disease prevention for Renfrew County residents.

Valvular Heart Disease Clinic

On December 2nd, we were pleased to host a mobile Valvular Heart Disease Screening Clinic in partnership with the Ottawa Heart Institute for those aged 65 and older who met certain eligibility criteria.

Each of the 20 patients who attended received, within an hour, a heart ultrasound and ECG, an assessment, a rapid blood test as well as their results and recommendations. It’s so great to see opportunities like this bring care closer to home!

PRH Granted Partial Designation Under Ontario’s French Language Services Act

We have finally received word that we have officially been granted partial designation under the province’s French Language Services Act for our X-ray service within Diagnostic Imaging.

As you may recall, the preparation work by our French Language Committee to achieve this took some time and included updates to our hospital’s French Language policy, updates to signage and other forms of communication to determine where bilingualism is required, updating forms and other patient-facing publications to ensure bilingual options are available, delivering information sessions for the Diagnostic Imaging team regarding active offer and also making changes to our website to ensure our community’s French speaking population can easily access information in their preferred language.

While this is a relatively small step, it is a great way for us to enhance the patient experience by offering, at least in some capacity, the opportunity for individuals to receive care in their first language, especially at a time when they may be anxious or in distress and it is part of a broader commitment to improved accessibility in health care.

Chief of Staff Report to Board

New Physician Prospects

Medical Affairs is currently at various stages of recruitment with a psychiatrist, emergency medicine physician, a general surgeon and a urologist. A successful community/site visit involving the psychiatrist was held December 2nd in partnership with the City of Pembroke and the County of Renfrew.

Social Media Campaign Update

Excitement around our new social media platforms has been building, and we are seeing a direct impact on physician recruitment as well as learners reaching out to learn about

opportunities at PRH after reviewing posts and ads on the platforms. In 2026, we plan to continue to build momentum and will soon be featuring more physician stories and FAQ posts.

2026 Conference Planning

With a comprehensive list of 2026 conferences now in hand, we will be developing identifying and prioritizing the best events to attend from a recruitment perspective while ensuring alignment with our current staffing needs.

New Division Lead For Orthopedics Program

Effective January 1st, Dr. Chris de Jesus has been appointed to a key leadership role as Orthopedic Division Head.

Actions Taken by the Board at its February 4, 2026 Board Meeting

Approved the following appointments/reappointments:

- 6 new physicians for Courtesy privileges
- 2 new midwives for Courtesy privileges
- 1 new nurse practitioner for Courtesy privileges

Approved the Pembroke Regional Hospital Bill of Rights and Responsibilities