

**2023**

# **Sault Area Hospital Annual Reports**





## Chief of Staff Report

Dr. Silvana Spadafora, Chief of Staff

Good evening Ladies and gentlemen of our Board, our community, my colleagues and co-workers.

When I was offered the opportunity to become the Chief of Staff of our hospital in 2017, I was honoured by the trust and support given to me. I was and remain excited to work with my fellow professional staff and colleagues throughout the hospital as we maintain the high standard of excellent care offered at the bedsides of SAH daily.

We are keenly aware that we are operating in one of the most

challenging environments as we evolve and proceed through these next stages of the pandemic as we evolve to endemic COVID... not post-COVID but in COVID... and resume our usual care. I am a believer that challenges allow opportunities, and we have the ability, the confidence and a strong foundation to leverage these opportunities. So despite the pandemic's challenges, we have pushed forward on many ambitious initiatives throughout the hospital. Because business was not as per its usual, we have been forced to adjust and accept various different and innovative approaches in providing our health care and family and work obligations. I would like to discuss some key external and internal influences that have a bearing on our hospital and our professional staff at this time.

One of the reasons for our success has been our ability to pivot rapidly to meet the challenges of fighting the pandemic at its peak. We are extraordinarily proud of our professional staff and workers who stepped up, again and again to help us battle the pandemic. Many of them paid a heavy personal price for their tremendous professionalism. We continue to commit to all to do all we can to support the health and wellness of our people, and I look forward to continuing to recruit talented newcomers to bolster our teams.

One of the positive outcomes

of the pandemic has been the increased cooperation and integration of services between healthcare providers across our region as well as within our community. We will continue to invest in this integration across our healthcare continuum as we strive to provide seamless patient experiences and the best possible care.

One of the peculiarities of healthcare in our province is that its goals are two-fold. While providing quality care close to home...right care to the right person at the right time in the right place ..... is a natural objective of our healthcare system, there is an over-arching social imperative that is equally important. Access and equity must go hand in hand. One cannot exist without the other. This dichotomy can bring with it its own pressures that we have had to navigate and will continue to navigate in this ever-evolving world of medicine and medical care. With the pandemic, these pressures have become more intensive not just locally but provincially and nationally. Benchmarks, even if they are static, can be difficult in the setting of the challenged capacity throughout our system. This creates an inevitable impact on our human resources, with departures and burnout as real risks for our system and achieving the right balance of service and sustainability becomes all the more critical for organizations such as ours.



Let me use this opportunity to place on record my appreciation for the work of my Senior Leader Team and my Medical Affairs team. I am grateful to them for their input and their inspiring presence and assistance in my work life each day. SAH has prided itself as an inclusive, supportive site to provide care. I wish to thank my MAC colleagues and my MSA colleagues for the collegial support they have provided this past year. While we have been navigating stormy conditions, SAH's talent and commitment of our people to our patients confirmed we have what it takes to steer ourselves toward success. Many of you are already aware of our programs, such as MACci, through which we provide quality training to our physicians in partnership with CPSO. In turn, this allows us to provide medical treatment to our patients which is evidence-informed and of high quality. As well, our MAC has taken steps to remodel program-based Quality committees using quality measures and methodologies to review what occurs in our programs and enhance the experience and the care of our patients. Our MAC Leaders play a crucial role in making our system work. However, their training to lead and manage teams, which impacts the efficiency of the system, requires ongoing support and enhancement. We aim to address this gap and provide them with the knowledge and tools they need to enhance their Managerial and Leadership skill

sets through the coming MAC cycles. On the education side, our hospital supports leadership development which our Chiefs and professional staff can access. We are also partnering with our local educational institutions, namely Sault College and NOSM University, to assist in developing these skill sets for our group. Our Wellness Committee, which remains a sub-committee of the MAC, remains a commitment by our MSA and MAC so our professional staff can continue to share learnings on how to mitigate stress in the workplace as well as avoid burnout.

Here again, I would like to express my gratitude to each and every one of our professional staff and SAH employees and their families who give of their time and efforts to foster and grow a positive work environment that allows us each

to bring our best every time we provide care to our patients at SAH.

We have come a long way in our journey, but we know we must continue on the path of compassionate care into the future as we work to fulfill our next strategic plan and beyond. We remain confident that this process will lead to a bold and transformative vision as we continue to serve our community by providing compassionate and person-centred care inspired by research, innovation and ongoing education.

*Thank you all once again.*

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**– Dr. Silvana Spadafora, Chief of Staff**



## President and CEO Report

Ila Watson, President and CEO

Madam Chair, Corporate members, colleagues and guests;

I am pleased to be with you this evening to report on hospital operations during a remarkable year. Knowing there are some special guests among us, I start by introducing myself. My name is Ila Watson, and I am proud to have served, since 2021, as the President and CEO of this hospital. This past year continued to be one of the challenges for this hospital, for the health system and indeed for our society as we worked through year three of a world with COVID. We continued to provide care and work with partners in a

very uncertain environment. We were challenged with risks that included continuing respiratory illness, shortages of health human resources challenges and considerable uncertainty in the health system. Despite these challenges, we have demonstrated our resilience as an organization.

During this past year, I and other leaders have had the opportunity to participate with system colleagues as we continue to evolve the Algoma Ontario Health Team, and as we move toward a shared electronic health record with hospital partners in northeastern Ontario. These are strong partnerships that are critical to moving toward an integrated system.

During this cycle, we brought a new strategic plan to our Board of Directors for approval. While many organizations have been focused on the day-to-day and the pandemic, we managed to ensure we are looking to the future. I am proud that we continue to be focused on compassionate person-centred care, a more supportive organization for workers and the strengthening of our operations. For the first time, our strategic plan includes a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and we have seen some important beginnings on what will be a continuing focus on Indigenous Health.

During the last several years, with partners, we had a strong response

to the pandemic and ensured we were able to support others in the province and across the country. These years, however, have been difficult for all of us. We see evidence of the fatigue and years of disconnectivity in our worker experience results, our sick time, and an ongoing need for focused efforts around recruitment and retention.

We still have a period of recovery ahead, and there are also many examples of how we have maintained our resilience in delivering quality care and rejuvenating for the future. Some examples of this include recognition related to organ donation, becoming a choosing wisely and choosing blood wisely hospital and achieving national Accreditation with Commendation following assessment against several thousand quality standards. Of course, we are all looking forward to the completion of the second cardiac catheterization lab and the opening of Northway Wellness Centre, which was formally named this past spring.

Results in measures related to the emergency department, a good reflection not only of our operations but many systems complexities, highlight the need for continued work and advocacy regarding system challenges, such as access to primary care, a good supply of skilled workers and the right place of care.

During the pandemic, hospitals, including ours, were well supported with funding to address new risks. Yet, the impacts of the overturning of Bill 124, significant inflationary increases and vulnerabilities elsewhere in the sector create uncertainty and are reasons for us ending the year in a deficit position. Continued resilience will be needed as we recover and continue our good work for those we serve.

During this year, changes were made to the senior leadership structure, and we have been fortunate to welcome two existing leaders into new roles: Shauna Hynna as Vice President of Transformation and Partnerships and Greg Zambusi as Vice President of Support Services and Chief Financial Officer. I would like to thank the whole senior team, the other members being – Silvana, Dr. Andy Webb and Sue Roger, for their dedication, commitment, patient-centeredness and leadership. More than ever before, knowing you can call on anyone, anytime, took on a far greater value during these last several years.

I thank the Executive Assistants – Patti Armstrong, Jennifer Doyle, and Alison Pook for their strong support and expertise provided to the board, its committees and members of the Senior Leadership Team. There have been many things to create, adapt to, and you play an incredibly important role in our organization.

This year, as we have now wound up our formal Covid-19 Incident Command Centre, I want to thank all who served in that manner over the last three years – this includes the Senior team, many leaders, physicians and subject matter experts – I won't name them all. I do want to give special recognition this year, however, to Brandy Sharp Young, our Manager of Communications and Public Affairs, as communication was so very vital during this time, and you did a great job leading us. I also want to extend special thanks to all of our Administrative Assistants who supported our Command Centre and did all manner of things needed – and did so with grace, skill and commitment.

In my role as CEO, I also have the privilege of being an ex-officio member of the Sault Area Hospital Foundation Board, and from that vantage point, say that

I am so grateful for the work of the SAHF team and its Board of Directors and an equally strong commitment to patients, those we serve and the great job they do for us, and with us, together.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the hundreds of people who volunteer their time in such a variety of ways at SAH – be it as a Wayfinder, patient family advisor, or in so many other roles – and this evening, I want to especially acknowledge the time and commitment of our Board of Directors. Thank you for your service. Thank you, Sharon, for your nine years dedicated to this board, including as Chair and committee chair, and thank you, Lisa, for stepping in as Chair this year.

Congratulations to this evening's award winners!

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**– Ila Watson, President & CEO**



## Board Chair Report

Lisa Bell-Murray, Board Chair

I am proud of the work we focused on as a Board during the last term. And while there was a shift in leadership during the past year, there was a continued focus on our three identified Board priorities, aligned with SAH Strategic Plan.

1. We undertook a Review of Governance Practices, looking for opportunities to advance our processes & practices to help us become better Governors in this complex system of healthcare
2. There was a continued focus on the Chief of Staff recruitment
3. Readiness for the 2023 Accreditation Process – for the Board's own preparedness for the Governance aspects of the Accreditation process. And;
4. A fourth priority emerged over

the year, Board Recruitment .... with some changes in Board leadership & resignations, we found ourselves in the position to start recruitment processes as we were ending this year's term.

I am pleased to report that we have made progress on all fronts. From the Governance Practices perspective, we have a number of ideas that I will continue to synthesize over the summer and present options for consideration at our fall governance meetings, looking to implement in the 2023 - 2024 term.

With the help of SAH leadership and our own Board subcommittee, the Board spent countless hours over the past year preparing for Accreditation. We are pleased to report that we met all of our Governance Standards. Thank you to both the SAH team and our own Board subcommittee for all that was done in supporting the Board on this priority.

And we have had strong interest in the recent Board recruitment postings. We will be looking to select new Board members over the summer for recommendation at a Special Meeting of the Corporation in fall 2023.

While the Board had identified these specific priorities, it also carried out its accountabilities related to its key governance functions. The Board continued its oversight role in Overseeing Quality (Care) and financial conditions & resources through the monitoring of the 2022-23 Quality Improvement plan, the financial budgets and financial results, and various hospital

indicators & metrics. The naming of the Northway Wellness Centre, the new withdrawal management centre, was a significant milestone that helped advance us one step closer to the opening of the facility. All of this work drives improvements in the quality of care we deliver.

The Board cannot accomplish all or any of its work without the significant amount of support and effort from so many others.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank our CEO, Ila Watson, and our COS, Dr. Spadafora, for their significant efforts and contributions during the past year. Leadership can be difficult at any point, but leadership during the past three years has been increasingly challenging, and the leadership they have provided on a day-in and day-out basis is commendable. Despite the constant need to pivot and react to a new reality, there are so many accomplishments you and your teams had. To name a few:

- Strong community partnerships were maintained & advanced
- SAH remained a lead with the Ontario health team initiatives, often stepping in and filling gaps where needed
- The 2023 Accreditation results – Accredited with Commendation – this is an outcome that did not happen without consistent and persistent efforts each and every day, keeping an eye on the key priorities of delivering and improving quality care. Well done for sure to you and all that helped achieve this!
- Our very own Dr. Silvana Spadafora, the recipient of the



prestigious Platinum Jubilee Award in Honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's 70th year on the throne. Dr. Spadafora was recognized for her incredible service to our community through her medical excellence, highest standards of patient care, advancement of the medical field, and leading the practice of medicine in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Board is supported by many others and, in particular, the ex officio directors who, by virtue of their positions, sit on the Board and Board committees. Thank you to;

- Ila Watson
- Dr. Spadafora
- Sue Roger
- Dr. Lorraine Sharp and
- Dr. Jim Boseovski

A thank you to our Board committees and the many individuals who support those committees. Much of the work of the Board sits in their very capable hands. A thank you to the other senior leaders Dr. Andy Webb; Greg Zambusi; Shauna Hynna; our executive assistants, Jennifer Doyle, Alison Pook and Patti Armstrong; all the medical directors and administrative directors. These individuals are crucial in researching, preparing, facilitating, supporting, or presenting great work at our committee meetings. Thank you to Brandy Sharp-Young, the very talented individual who helps manage so many of the SAH communications & related processes but also to us as a Board as well. A thank you to our Board committee chairs for the role you take on, Johanne Messier Mann, Armand Capisciolto and Antoinette

Blunt; thank you to the entire Board for your commitment and dedication to SAH. Thank you to our Medical Advisory Committee, our staff, our physicians and our volunteers for all that you do in the pursuit of our common goal. And finally, a thank you to the Sault Area Hospital Foundation Board and staff for the significant role they play in fundraising for the needed capital equipment, so essential for providing patient care.

It takes a village, they say...and that's resonates with me. It is this collective whole who come together each and every day, giving it their all, in the good times and the bad times, each with enthusiasm and resilience, which help to drive us toward achieving our Vision;

- Trusted Partner. Outstanding Care. And advancing our mission;
- Exceptional people working together to provide outstanding care in Algoma.

I would like to acknowledge one of our long-term Board members, Sharon Kirkpatrick, who was Chair

of the Board until June 2022 and remained a valued Board member during her last term. This AGM will mark the end of a 9-year term that Sharon has had with SAH. The level of dedication and commitment Sharon has given to help the Board and SAH has been outstanding. Sharon, on behalf of the Board of Directors and Sault Area Hospital, we thank you for your years of dedicated service.

So in closing, as we end the 2023 term, the journey continues! The Board has worked closely with our leaders to understand the key risks facing us as we emerge from the pandemic. The future will certainly be challenging but equally as interesting and invigorating as we help the organization, from our governance lens, navigate the new reality, managing the HHR risks, funding uncertainties, and the changing landscape of Healthcare. And I am excited that each of you will be part of this journey with us. Thank you for being a part of this team and helping us make a difference in healthcare!

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**– Lisa Bell-Murray, Board Chair**

**Trusted Partner.**

**Outstanding Care.**

