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December 19, 2016

Dr. Denis Roy, CEO
Health Sciences North
41 Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury, ON P3E 5J1

Ron Gagnon, CEO
Sault Area Hospital
750 Great Northern Road
Sault Ste Marie, ON P6B 0A8

Dear Denis and Ron,

On Thursday, December 8th, I had the opportunity to meet with Nancy Johnson and Roma Smith, two representatives of the Northeast Family Councils Network. They expressed their strong concerns about the perceived pressure being placed on patients needing alternate level of care (ALC) to pay full daily hospital rates while they await placement into long-term care.

I, more than anyone, appreciate the fact that the ALC problem is a system-wide challenge, and not one that acute care hospitals can solve in isolation. The recently passed *Patients First Act* encourages regional-level planning by all health care partners to ensure adequate resources are in place in hospital and in community to continue to place patients where they need to be at each point along their health care journey.

The decision to enter long-term care is an emotional one for families. As you know, and as outlined in correspondence from Ruth Hawkins, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in 2011, the integrated discharge planning teams are to take a patient-centred approach to these difficult discussions, and to work with patients and families to identify reasonable options available in the community for safe discharge. Payment discussions outside of the regulated co-payment charges should only occur as a last resort, and only for patients who have been discharged by a physician but are refusing to leave the hospital.

I trust that you will give this letter serious consideration. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to provide quality care for patients in hospital and in community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise Paquette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and "P".

Louise Paquette
Chief Executive Officer

LP/sc