

Southlake announces Dr. Paul Woods as next President and CEO



Healthcare leader and Primary Care Physician Dr. Paul Woods will take the helm of Southlake Regional Health Centre in 2024 following the retirement of President & CEO Arden Krystal.

Dr. Woods' appointment was announced by the local hospital on November 29 after a lengthy recruitment process.

He brings more than 25 years of experience and a local perspective to the hospital, which serves a wide catchment area in northern York Region and south Simcoe County.

An internationally-recognized expert in integrated care, Dr. Woods is a seasoned executive with more than 25 years of experience focused on clinical excellence, frontline staff and physician engagement, organizational culture, and team wellness, said the Southlake team in their announcement.

In addition to his experience as a physician, Southlake noted Dr. Woods' time as a student at Newmarket's Huron Heights Secondary School, just a stone's throw from the hospital east on Davis Drive, and subsequently the University of Western Ontario.

As a primary care physician, he has worked in rural and urban environments across the country and has also served as a flight surgeon with the Canadian Armed Forces.

He has held leadership positions at the London Health Sciences Centre, Alberta Health Services, the University of Calgary's Department of Family Medicine, and Trinity Health, which serves the United States Midwest.

The Board and I are beyond thrilled to have found someone of Paul's calibre to help us fulfill the hospital's growth plans to meet our communities' needs, said Marilee Harris, Chair of the Southlake Board. Paul's leadership was instrumental in opening Ontario's first publicly-owned ambulatory surgery centre and achieving exemplary standing with Accreditation Canada. His visionary thinking and collaborative approach is exactly what our organization needs to overcome the challenges facing Ontario's healthcare system.

Dr. Woods will assume leadership on January 3.

It is an honour to be chosen to work alongside the talented and dedicated team at Southlake to help deliver leading edge care, said Dr. Woods in a statement. I am humbled by the opportunity to contribute to the organization's esteemed history having watched Southlake evolve from York County Hospital into the world-renowned institution it is today while growing up in Newmarket.

Last week's announcement also included words of gratitude for the service of Krystal, who led Southlake through a period of exceptional growth in the communities the hospital serves and, therefore, the demands on Southlake.

Krystal was named President & CEO in 2017, succeeding Dr. Dave Williams in the post.

She came to Southlake from British Columbia with more than 30 years of experience in the public health sector. From the outset, she said she recognized the "strain" Southlake was experiencing due to significant growth in the York Region and South Simcoe communities and set to work with staff and volunteers to evaluate the "needs and wants" within the community.

In a letter announcing Krystal's retirement, the Southlake Board leaders offered their "sincere thanks and appreciation" to Krystal for her "stellar leadership and countless contributions" since she came to the hospital.

"It's no secret that the communities we serve, among the fastest-growing and aging in Ontario, have dramatically outgrown our facilities," they said. "Arden's focus on attracting the resources we need to be successful has led to the addition of 117 more beds ? a 28 per cent increase, a \$156 million increase in our annual funding (40 per cent increase), and most importantly, 21 per cent more dedicated staff ? nearly 700 additional people. We could go on as there are many more accomplishments under Arden's leadership, but we will save those for a later date as she has many more months at the helm."

Last week, the Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation added to both the tributes to Krystal and the words of welcome for Dr. Woods.

"As Arden Krystal retires from her role at the end of 2023, we express our sincere gratitude for her leadership and contributions which have enriched Southlake and our communities," said Foundation President & CEO Jennifer Ritter. "With deep experience in leading and elevating healthcare institutions and roots in the Newmarket area, Paul understands and values the integral role that Southlake's donor community plays in advancing leading edge healthcare."

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