

## Southlake President & CEO announces retirement

Arden Krystal, who has led Southlake Regional Health Centre through exceptional growth and through the challenges of a global pandemic, has announced her retirement, effective next year.

Her decision to step down was announced July 5 by Marilee Harris, Chair of Southlake's Board of Directors and past-Chair Patrick K. Horgan.

In their statement, they said Krystal shared with the Board of Directors her ?intention to retire early in 2024.?

?Given the time required to recruit a new CEO, we are announcing this now so that the search process can begin immediately,? they said. ?In the meantime, we know Arden is excited to continue to lead the organization as we drive progress on numerous important initiatives, including our ongoing clinical recovery, the exciting redevelopment project, and our focus on people.?

Since Krystal was appointed President & CEO of the local hospital in 2017, succeeding Dr. Dave Williams in the post, the hospital has marked multiple achievements and addressed several challenges.

In addition to steering the hospital through the waters of the pandemic, her time at Southlake has seen multiple capital campaigns come to fruition, including those aimed at increasing capacity in mental health services and maternal health, along with laying the groundwork of a new Southlake campus that will ease the burden on its current standalone facility on Newmarket's Davis Drive.

Krystal 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.

?It's evident when you walk through the hallways and through the Emergency Department and see the kinds of volumes staff are contending with,? Krystal told The Auroran in 2018, well before the additional strains due to COVID were on the horizon.?

In their letter, the 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.

?In the coming weeks, the Board will commence a comprehensive national search for our next President & CEO to build on Arden's legacy and lead Southlake into the next phase of our journey.?

Addressing the Southlake community, they concluded, ?We want to thank you all for your ongoing dedication to the communities we serve. Your expertise and commitment to our purpose at Southlake ? to build healthy communities through outstanding care, innovative partnerships, and amazing people ? is truly inspiring.?

In a statement to The Auroran, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher-Murphy, who serves as Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health, said Krystal has been a ?strong advocate? for local healthcare.

?To be a leader of a Regional Health Centre not only takes solid management skills, but it also takes vision, innovation and courage,? she said. ?These characteristics are exactly what Arden Krystal has brought to Southlake Regional Health Centre over the

past six years. Her contributions have been numerous. I would like to specifically thank her for strengthening their Health Partnerships program. In addition, thanks to Arden's strong advocacy, Southlake is well on their way to planning for the redevelopment of the hospital to a two-site location that will meet the needs of our growing communities for generation to come.

?Thank you, Arden, for your leadership, vision, innovation and courage.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter