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## **Media Release**

### **York Central Hospital Family Celebrates Norooz, the Persian New Year!**

Richmond Hill, ON: Norooz in Persian means "New Day." This celebration of the New Year, brings hope, peace and prosperity to the world. Norooz transcends nationality, politics and religion and is celebrated in many countries around the globe such as Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Georgia, Iraq, Tajikistan, Syria, Armenia and India. Norooz begins on the first day of Spring. York Central Hospital is pleased to recognize and participate in this celebration.

Norooz, or Persian New Year is one of the largest cultural events celebrated by millions of people of Persian heritage in many countries across the globe. York Central Hospital is pleased to celebrate alongside staff, physicians and volunteers. Organized and funded by staff and physicians of Persian descent, this event allows members of the York Central Hospital team to share in this celebration with their colleagues, our patients and visitors. This year marks 1387 on the Persian calendar.

**Jackie Samimi is a Patient Relations Coordinator** at York Central Hospital and Master of Ceremonies for today's event. Born in Tehran, Iran she left Iran when she was 13, but memories of Norooz, including family gatherings, gift exchanges and traditional rituals are some of the things that she has carried with her since. Jackie now proudly shares her traditions with her family and is excited to have the opportunity to celebrate with her Persian and non Persian colleagues.

"I feel this opportunity has created a special bond amongst the hospital staff," says Samimi. "When we share our cultures with each other, we enable staff to build relationships with each other and our patients, their families and the growing community. When we know a little more about one another, it makes understanding our difference a little easier. This is what makes Canada and specially Richmond Hill so special."

**Reza Moridi** MPP for Richmond Hill, commented, "As the first Iranian-Canadian elected to the Province of Ontario Legislative Assembly, it is my honour to extend my warmest greetings as we celebrate the wonderful ancient tradition of Norooz. Nooroz is a rich tradition followed by many countries and territories, and marks the first day of spring and the beginning of the Iranian calendar. Ontario is so fortunate to be home to so many cultures which celebrate Nowruz. And my sincere thanks to York Central Hospital for organizing today's event, and encouraging all members of the community to participate in the celebration of Norooz."

"Events like this show the diversity of our hospital and our local community," says **Jo-Anne Marr VP of Programs and Chair of the Hospital's Diversity Council**. "We are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the cultures of our staff and community and thank the committees for organizing these events for the benefit of all our team members."

Sponsored by York Central Hospital staff of Persian descent, this event is one of many held throughout the year to celebrate various cultural traditions and festivities. Other recent festivities have included: Chinese New Year, Black History Month, and Diwali. York Central Hospital reflects the diversity of the community it serves with more than 48 languages spoken by members of our health care team.

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