

Talk It Up Victoria

RVH
RENFREW VICTORIA HOSPITAL

The official newsletter of the Renfrew Victoria Hospital

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Small-town health care provides big-city expertise



Our proud partner in enhanced health care services may be physically located a good 100 kilometres away from our front door, but its presence and professional expertise is experienced by patients here in the heart of Renfrew on a daily basis.

Renfrew Victoria Hospital and The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) have enjoyed a strong, professional partnership for more than two decades.

The convenience of extended services like our well-established hemodialysis program and oncology systemic therapy program to those regularly receiving life-saving treatments closer to home would not exist if it weren't for a solid relationship built on respect, and a thorough understanding of the challenges of a rural hospital.

The linkage with various existing programs at TOH enables us to provide the best health care possible, in a seamless fashion, all while keeping quality assurance levels at the same standards of a larger city-based hospital.

TOH's President and CEO, Dr. Jack Kitts, says the driving force is that the philosophy of TOH is keeping in line with the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), which is to have every patient receive quality care in the most appropriate health care setting, as quickly as possible and as close to home as possible.

From his perspective, that is achieved by looking to RVH as a leader in representing quality, all-encompassing care, and the many partnerships have been made possible through advancements in modern-day technology such as using the Ontario Telehealth Network (OTN).

Yet, he feels the RVH partnership is exceptionally strong and attributes two main factors:

"Number one is that you have an incredible CEO who is very committed to quality care and has been an outstanding partner. Everything just flows from there, right down to the medical team and nursing staff."

The second factor is that Dr. Kitts is a native of Barry's Bay and his perspective of health care in the Valley is rooted deep here at RVH and especially at our sister hospital, St. Francis Memorial Hospital, where he once worked as a physician in the emergency department.

"I understand the importance of the hospital to the town," he states.

Plus, RVH is recognized for having a wonderful reputation among professionals in our LHIN, "They are what many other community hospitals aspire to be," says Dr. Kitts.

"RVH recognized some time ago that working collaboratively with a larger health care provider is a 'common-

sense' way of significantly improving service without major financial burden on our hospital or the province," says Andy Boldt, Chair of the RVH Board of Directors. "We are extremely fortunate to have fostered a strong working relationship with TOH through the progressive management style of the RVH team."

Our management team continues to take a very proactive leadership role in seeking synergies with TOH, as demonstrated by our cooperative programs that include dialysis, oncology, heart, TeleHealth, surgery, radiology, and thrombosis, Boldt mentions.

"Over the years, our hospital has enjoyed a wonderful working relationship with The Ottawa Hospital," comments RVH President and CEO Randy Penney. "I personally believe that it is extremely important for hospitals like Renfrew Victoria Hospital and St. Francis Memorial Hospital to be as integrated as we can be with The Ottawa Hospital. I believe it is in the best interest of quality patient care. For our patients, our staff and physicians, being clinically integrated with the largest academic centre in Eastern Ontario is essential. If you look at most of our clinical programs, from dialysis, cancer services, radiology—I could go on and on—we have built up a wonderful working relationship with our partners at The Ottawa Hospital, so that, for our patients, it appears seamless."

"I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the tremendous support we receive from Dr. Jack Kitts, members of his Senior Management Team and Clinicians at the Ottawa Hospital. They are sensitive to the challenges of providing services in our rural communities (Renfrew and Barry's Bay) and do what they can to maintain programs and services," acknowledges Penney.

"I have said many times over the years, all of us in Eastern Ontario are dependent on a very strong Ottawa Hospital and Jack Kitts has delivered this. He has provided clinical and financial stability along with growth and we have all benefitted from this," adds Penney.

Looking at our most recent major integration, our decision to partner with The Ottawa Hospital to have their radiologists do all of our interpretations for RVH and SFMH, has resulted in access to close to 60 radiologists with such great expertise, says Penney. "From a patient safety perspective, the gains are enormous."

Dr. Kitts believes the gains are felt on both sides—it relieves much of the pressure felt by TOH staff in their waiting rooms and enables them to keep their occupancy levels down.

"The professionals at TOH and RVH really both benefit from our partnerships," he adds.



"RVH's strength is definitely its commitment to quality care and using strong partnerships to get that Ottawa-sized expertise in the comfort of its small town."

—Dr. Jack Kitts, TOH President and CEO

Close nephrology teamwork provides access and education

Janet Graham understands the burden on dialysis patients of having to travel to the city for appointments, and part of her job is to work closely with the team in Renfrew to ease that burden for their vascular access needs.

Graham is an Advanced Practice Nurse and leader of the Vascular Access Team at The Ottawa Hospital. She has worked closely with RVH for the past 12 years. Every hemodialysis patient requires vascular access, so the nurses can easily access the blood for their treatments, she explains.

“It’s one of the biggest challenges when it comes to dialysis, and requires

consistency so we can get the blood out, have it dialyzed and returned to the body during their treatment.”

The collaboration provides patients with expertise from highly specialized vascular surgeons and interventional radiologists to create and troubleshoot their dialysis access, explains Janice Verch-Whittington, RVH’s Clinical Manager of Nephrology.

“We do not have any of these specialties available on site in Renfrew due to the highly specialized nature of what they do,” she says.

Staff at RVH also benefit from regular education opportunities to improve their skill and knowledge about dialysis access, says Verch-Whittington.

“The sharing is exemplified on both sides—we learn a lot from the people in Renfrew too. It is quite a unique collaboration,” notes Graham.

Every one of our patients is referred to Graham and the physicians who she works with to manage their dialysis access, adds Verch-Whittington. “We have a vascular access and PD access coordinator on site who communicates every day with Janet and her team in Ottawa to ensure that our patients get quick and seamless access to these services at TOH.”

Graham says she and her team coordinate that care, “and we really do work together to reduce the burden of the travel, so they can have the procedure,



Janet Graham

and follow it up with a dialysis treatment to make sure everything is okay before they go back home.”

This deep connection with the vascular access team extends beyond daily consults to regular clinical practice meetings between Verch-Whittington and the team in Ottawa for ongoing discussions on policies and procedures for dialysis access patients.

“Janice is a fabulous person and advocates so well for her patients. She’s so genuine, caring and works really hard.”

Those qualities go a long way in a successful partnership, Graham says, along with the real key to this working relationship—communication.

“Everybody puts the patient first. Everyone there (RVH) and here in Ottawa is involved in their care.”

Dan Munro has been living with kidney disease since the 1990s, but after some complications with his health this past summer, has been requiring regular dialysis treatments in Renfrew. He has quickly become familiar with the high level of coordination and communication between RVH and TOH regarding his vascular access needs.

The Pembroke resident is grateful to the staff in Renfrew who do all of the organization of his appointments, so he just needs to show up at the General campus.

“I’m really impressed with this (Renfrew) unit, and they’re also really good to me in Ottawa.”

Munro recently had access placed in his arm and will need to go to Ottawa again to have the one in his chest removed, which he is really looking forward to because it will allow him to swim and take showers again.

“They work hand in hand—I don’t know how it could be much better,” he says, reporting on the smooth interactions between the two organizations.



Collaborative cardiac partnership sets an example

A sister hospital to The Ottawa Hospital, The University of Ottawa Heart Institute is another major partnership on which professionals at RVH can rely for their expertise when one of our patients experiences the symptoms of a heart attack.

“We have adopted the STEMI (ST-elevation myocardial infarction) protocols from the Heart Institute—this means patients receive urgent transfer to the UOHI for cardiac intervention. This program is offered in the inpatient units, as well as emergency,” explains RVH’s Clinical Nurse Manager Jessica Gilbert.

“We also have a relationship with UOHI that allows non-STEMI cardiac patients to be referred and triaged appropriately so that patients can receive intervention including cardiac catheterization or PCI.”

Gilbert also points out that Dr. Shanti Nemani has been a great addition to our

team as an on-site Internist. “Not only does he help to facilitate patient transfers to tertiary centres, but he also updates the RVH team as to the status of Renfrew patients while they are in the city centre.”

“Renfrew Victoria really are shining stars—they are great people to work with and really understand the importance of best practice quality initiatives,” comments Bonnie Bowes, Regional Program Educator for UOHI.

Physicians from UOHI regularly travel to Renfrew for educational seminars with our local physicians and nursing staff.

The Heart Institute has implemented throughout the Champlain LHIN a GAP Tool (Guidelines Applied to Practice)—a checklist geared to heart attack patients upon their discharge that details their prescriptions for medications along with nutrition and exercise recommendations.

Patients are given a copy of their GAP Tool, along with their family physician so they can see the complete list of UOHI-approved medications.

Renfrew has an exemplary track record since introducing the GAP Tool at RVH two years ago, notes Bowes. She attributes much of the success between the two organizations to the dedication of Gilbert and Vice-President of Patient Care Services, Christene Ferguson, who do “a lot of the surveillance on their own” by contacting patients directly, after they have been to the Heart Institute.

“So much so that I am working with Jessica to present RVH as a model to other hospitals at the Canadian Cardiovascular Society Conference in October,” adds Bowes.

As the intake hospital for cardiac patients across the region, the education component within the community hospital is a critical factor in a patient’s outcome.

“When best practice guidelines are followed, it reduces the rates for morbidity, mortality and re-admission to hospital,” Bowes states.

Both Gilbert and Bowes are looking forward to sharing their successes as part of their presentation, *It’s about Partnership, not Ownership... Nurses collaborating to Improve Heart Failure Patient Teaching*.

It discusses one example of low-sodium diet teaching that was documented to be happening in seven per cent of the cases before implementing the GAP tool—post-implementation it has rocketed to 100% compliance.

“There’s simply a great relationship between the Institute and Renfrew. They truly understand the complexities and importance of these protocols in cardiology,” concludes Bowes.

Surgical connection matches standards and speeds process

New RVH Surgeon, Dr. Susan Krajewski, is benefitting from an informal affiliation among the professionals at TOH to improve the care of patients here in Renfrew, especially in areas of breast and colon cancer-related surgeries.

Every Monday she meets with the professionals at TOH through Ontario Telehealth Network videoconferencing technology to review cases with her colleagues in Ottawa. She is able to discuss issues with the head breast imaging radiologist and a number of other professionals during these Breast Rounds meetings.

“The goal here is to provide the same standard of care patients would experi-

ence at The Ottawa Hospital, when it is appropriate to be treated here,” she says, adding that more complex cases are often transferred to the larger centre.

Facilitating the seamless transfer of patients better served in Ottawa has improved with the regular participation of Breast Rounds, as has expedited appointments for MRIs and other specialized services not currently offered in Renfrew.

“When the patient doesn’t have to wait long for something like an MRI to be done in Ottawa, we are able to complete their surgery quicker and speed up the entire process, which then allows the patient to heal and recover faster.”



RN Erin Prentice listens in as RVH patient Catherine Guyea speaks with Dr. Melissa Forgie at TOH via Teleconference – an effective method of consulting with out-of-town specialists.

Thrombosis clinic grows with help of TOH

RVH opened a satellite unit of the Thrombosis Assessment Treatment Unit (TATU), based at The Ottawa Hospital, in early 2012 and more and more patients are benefiting from this service each month.

“It is an extended arm of our clinic, but patients have the ability to be seen and treated in their own community,” states Melissa Nicastro, RN and Clinical Manager of Ambulatory Care at the Civic Campus, the current home of TATU. The unit will soon be moving into a newly-built addition on the General Campus off Smyth Road.

“Everything being done within the Renfrew unit is as good as being here at The Ottawa Hospital,” says Josée Drolet, RN, Liaison for the Regional Thrombosis Program at TOH, adding that RVH has adapted all protocols, documentation and guidelines from TATU.

Just six months into the new partnership, RVH has already provided care to more than 20 people in our community, saving numerous trips back and forth to the city.

Erin Prentice, RVH Thrombosis Liaison for TATU telehealth, spent two weeks under the mentorship of Nicastro, Drolet and the team at TATU for special training focused on the complexities and treatment of patients with deep vein thrombosis (blood clots in the leg) and pulmonary embolus (clots in the lung). She returned to RVH in a mentorship role to help fellow nursing staff properly identify and treat the condition.

- She explains the joint objectives of the program are to:
1. Provide and coordinate care with the top internists and hematologists in the country who practise out of the Ottawa clinics.
 2. Provide the possibility of telehealth for patients living in our community, decreasing the need/costs involved in travelling to and from Ottawa.
 3. Provide and offer one-on-one teaching to allow patients the ability to become involved in their own care, increasing independence.

Prentice and the nursing team also have access to our own internist, Dr. Shanti Nemani, to follow patients when needed. Dr. Nemani also can rely on the professional expertise of those at TATU for additional support.

The satellite unit works very closely through the entire process with the patients and the specialists at TATU. From testing to filling out forms, it is a streamlined back-and-forth of information between the two sites.

“Initially, it’s a scary diagnosis for patients who are referred to the clinic either by their family doctor or in the emergency room,” says Prentice.

Patients will meet with a nurse from RVH, and then meet specialists in Ottawa with the help of video conferencing through the Ontario Telehealth Network (telehealth) to discuss their plan of treatment. They also have an opportunity to ask questions.



Registered nurses Josée Drolet and Melissa Nicastro

“Our patients are eager not to travel and grateful for any teaching,” Prentice notes about the treatment process, which is usually by injection.

“We collaborate so well,” comments Drolet. “Erin is very keen and the fact RVH has an internist on site is a wonderful asset to the program.”

“Everyone there (TOH) is very accessible when we need them to help troubleshoot or have any questions,” notes Prentice.

“And the nice thing is that if a patient does need to go to Ottawa at any time in the process, they can recognize a face and name and feel a little more at ease.”

New radiology linkage is a natural fit

When it comes time to interpret our many X-Ray, Ultrasound, and CT scans conducted in the Diagnostic Imaging department at RVH, we can now rely on some of the top doctors in the country to assist us in examining the images we use to diagnose our patients.

It’s all part of the latest agreement with TOH, where we have teamed up with the Ottawa Hospital and Region Imaging Associates (OHRIA)—a group of 56 radiologists that also provides outreach coverage to other hospitals in the Champlain LHIN.

“As a result of our new radiology partnership with TOH we can now provide ‘specialist’ support for many types of diagnostic imaging,” explains Andy Boldt, Chair of the RVH Board of Directors. “The integration of this program with our existing personnel has been seamless and the planned upgrading of our IT infrastructure will further enhance feedback speed and efficiency.”

The need for the upgrade in the digital imaging system is a key component to streamlining the process, as explained by the head of RVH’s Diagnostic Imaging department, Phil Crozier: “We have accomplished a great deal in the last few months—the next step is to migrate to a McKesson PACS (Picture Archiving and Communications System), so the TOH Radiologists won’t have to move to a dedicated RVH workstation, and will be able to report our studies on the same PACs they utilize for TOH and the other valley hospitals that have partnered with them.”

The high level of expertise among this group of specialized radiologists is available to our own technologists and physicians during regular hours from Monday through Friday, with on-call coverage after hours and on weekends, notes Crozier.

“We have had more than 20 of the radiologists from TOH on site at RVH over the past few months. They have all been very friendly, approachable and professional.

Truly it’s been a great experience thus far—and we don’t expect that to change in the future,” he says.

Dr. Mark Schweitzer, Chief of Radiology at TOH, describes this partnership as “a very unique opportunity” where patients in a rural setting are able to benefit from the professionals at the second largest radiology department in Canada—“it is the same quality of care as they would find at a large city hospital.”

Again, the team of radiologists also benefit from the diversification of their practice through the linkages with our community hospital, notes Dr. Schweitzer. “We’re a young group, about half of the radiologists are new and they all have an opportunity not to be more than a subspecialist. They are practising the same stuff they just learned,” which he says is an intangible benefit.

He feels the initial stages of this new venture have gone very smoothly due to the mutual respect and pre-existing relationships between both hospitals.



Dr. Mark Schweitzer

“You have a great CEO, and with Jack Kitts’s involvement—this partnership is very fitting within the natural confines of what we do.”

He is also impressed at the high level of service in the diagnostic imaging department that was already offered to the community. “They have very good equipment, dedicated physicians and really good technicians in Renfrew,” says Dr. Schweitzer, noting that the involvement of the OHRIA only enhances the level of care that can be offered at a rural facility.

Cancer care team facilitates best outcomes

It is a frightening diagnosis that is often accompanied by rounds of complex and physically exhausting treatments, but cancer patients can rely on years of experience from the experts at both TOH and RVH as a result of the collaborative efforts within the Champlain Regional Systemic Therapy Program.

“We are all part of one team, even though we are not in the same geographic location,” says Cathy Degrasse, TOH’s Clinical Director of the Cancer Program, adding that each patient is provided with the safest care possible, no matter where they are located.

Practising the same standards and quality of care is priority number one, adds Carrie Liska, Care Facilitator for the Regional Cancer Program.

“That level of assurance for all of our patients is paramount,” Liska adds.

This is particularly true when the drugs prescribed to cancer patients require careful and constant monitoring from profession-



Carrie Liska

als across the board—from the pharmacist to the physician—as they work together to facilitate the best outcome for each patient.

More often than not, patients are able to receive their treatments close to home after being seen by cancer specialists in Ottawa. Last year, the RVH cancer care team administered 650 chemotherapy treatments.

Renfrew is one of three regional satellite units of the program—sites are also located in Winchester and Hawkesbury.

As the first partner in the program in 1993, RVH paved the way for the other satellite units in the LHIN and allows TOH to leverage resources so they are able to treat cancer patients across the region in a more timely manner, notes Degrasse. The two organizations have built a strong relationship over the years, and there is a high level of trust among the nursing staff and pharmacy on both sides.

“Renfrew has been very helpful in getting the other satellite sites going,” notes Degrasse. “They are very receptive to sharing with others, and there is a high level of compassion in delivering care.”

She also mentions that the commitment between the two organizations is one of the stronger models of teamwork in the province.

“It’s an excellent partnership and we do work very well together,” says RN Rhonda Normandeau, who has spent the past 15 years in the RVH Oncology Unit and

Operating Room and followed many patients through the system from surgery to treatments.

“We liaise with the nurses and oncologists there on a daily basis, and then we have Dr. (John) Matosh and Dr. (Stephanie) Langlois to cover the patients here,” explains Normandeau.

She reports that patients are always grateful when they are told they can receive their treatments closer to home.

Our professionals are also offered many expanded learning opportunities through the partnership. “They coordinate ongoing education and workshops for us to keep up to date with our training,” says Normandeau. This is a critical component when the world of cancer-related drug therapies is constantly changing.

“We all learn a lot from each other, and those benefits trickle down to where it’s most important—our patients,” concludes Degrasse.

Call to Action

LEARN  KNOW  ACT



RVH Foundation is taking strides to enhance its online presence. If you would like to receive RVH Foundation and Renfrew Victoria Hospital news electronically, please send your email address to: info@rvhfoundation.com

Legacy Giving

The Renfrew Victoria Hospital holds a special place in Renfrew. From the day it welcomed its first patient in 1897, RVH has been dedicated to providing care and planning for tomorrow. The long-standing tradition continues today.

Planned giving to your community hospital is an investment in the future of quality health care while benefitting from the advantages for yourself and your loved ones.

Ask yourself:

- Do I want to leave a legacy gift?
- Do I want to be in control of my gift?
- Do I want to ensure I have taken full advantage of tax benefits for my estate?
- Do I want to have a say in how my donations are spent?
- Do I want to be recognized for my gift?
- Do I want to choose a charity that I know will be accountable for my wishes?

What call do you need to make?

- Contact your financial representative to **Learn** of the tax advantages available to you.
- Contact the foundation to **Know** all you need to know about your charity of choice.
- Contact your legal representative to **Act** and make your wishes known.

Renfrew and area has been swinging fore us!

Everyone hopes to “leave their mark” on this world—a significant act or contribution that will benefit and be remembered by others well into the future. Some leave a legacy they created such as music, paintings, and

inventions—by giving their time and services as leaders and volunteers, or by bequeathing a gift to a charitable cause. Still others, due to circumstance, never have that chance.

In this issue of *Talk it Up*, we highlight three events organized by family and friends who have taken on the task of creating a legacy in honour of a loved one.

The Crystal Gillan Memorial Golf Tournament

July 21 marked the 5th annual Crystal Gillan Memorial golf event. A modest beginning by family and friends has resulted in nearly \$20,000.00 to date donated to Renfrew Victoria Hospital. In addition, the group has directed funds to the Humane Society, which is a cause that meant a lot to Crystal. The organizers work hard and come up with creative ideas that make the day fun. This event is held for the right reason—sharing memories for good causes. Although the organizers are hesitant to accept recognition, we feel their efforts shouldn't go unnoticed, and a heartfelt thanks is extended from the RVH family.

The 3rd Annual Don MacDonald Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament

Our sincere appreciation to the team at Whitetail Golf Club in Eganville. The commitment and hard work of owners and management—Jack & Lorraine MacDonald, Shawn McHale & Janet Robertson, Dave & Tammy Moore, CPGA Professional Derek MacDonald, family and friends—ensure the success of the event. This year, \$4,100.00 was donated to Renfrew Victoria Hospital.

Keeping in mind that Don was one of the first and longest-surviving heart transplant recipients in Canada, the funds will be used towards the purchase of a Spacelabs Cardiac Monitor for our Special Care Unit.

The 1st Annual James Eady Memorial Golf Tournament



This event teed off on September 12, 2012. James' severe kidney disease in the 1970s necessitated travel to and extensive stay in Ottawa for treatment. To honour James, and in appreciation of quality care close to home, Lloyd and Shirley Eady earmarked the proceeds for the RVH Dialysis Unit.

Our thanks to those who offer memoriam tributes to RVH in honour of their loved ones. These gifts support the hospital in its ongoing efforts to bring quality care to those it serves. It is a meaningful way to give back to the institution that provides a lifetime of care to those in need.

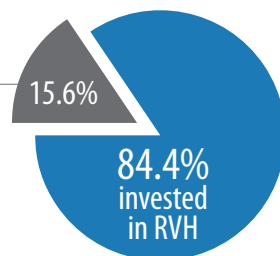
We want our donors to know...

Tax dollars pay for some health care services, but not all of them. As new technologies emerge and the needs of our community increase, our support for RVH remains very important.

While it is necessary for the Foundation to carry out fundraising activities, we take the task of managing fundraising costs very seriously.

The industry standard cost to raise money in Canada is estimated to be 20¢ to 25¢ per dollar raised. This figure can be influenced by many factors (e.g., type of organization, type of fundraising campaign).

The RVH Foundation's average cost over the last 16 years has been 15.6%.



Not only that, but you can rest assured that the dollars raised are being used for the exact purpose they were intended. Your gifts have helped the hospital to purchase a new CT scan, state-of-the-art Digital Mammography equipment and more.

You never know whose life you might touch, but you will know that you have made a difference.

Call to Action

LEARN  KNOW  ACT

Run/Walk for Digital Mammography Saturday, October 13

Information is available in the Foundation office or visit us on Facebook.

Healing Garden project

The Healing Garden Fundraising Team will honour Renfrew & Area Country Music Hall of Fame Inductees October 28, 1:30–5:30 p.m., Renfrew Armouries, Tickets \$12.00



Tree of Lights 2012

Dr. Sharon Collins will be the featured artist for the 2012 Tree of Lights campaign. Watch for her handmade art quilt-inspired card in your mailbox this year.



The Renfrew
Victoria
Hospital
Foundation

Make RVH your charity of choice. Please call the RVH Foundation office at 613-432-4851 ext. 263, or visit us online at www.rvhfoundation.com to learn more about how you can contribute to the RVH difference.