

## GRAND ROUNDS

To help everyone in Renfrew and area catch a few more ZZZs this year, the RVH Sleep Lab and Sleep Products store have both expanded their services.

Our hospital has been helping patients who suffer from a variety of sleep disorders for more than 13 years. We are affiliated with the Ottawa Hospital's Sleep Lab at the Civic Site and Respiriologist Dr. Judith Leech.

"Sleep is important. We spend one third of our lives doing it, and it's necessary to feel well rested to go about your day," says Dr. Leech.

Addressing issues of lack of energy and feeling tired can be key to your overall health, she states. With help from sleep professionals the ultimate benefit is "the immediate feeling of being rested."

As was the case for patient Merrill Camelon, who is thrilled with the results he's seen since his initial testing last September. "My only regret is not having gone sooner. It's like I have a whole new life now."

Camelon says he didn't realize he wasn't sleeping properly in the first place and it's remarkable how much more energy he has now that he's sleeping soundly with the aid of a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine.

He's also very appreciative of the care shown by everyone working in the sleep lab and in the store: "Everyone is always so nice."

Dr. Leech says the long-term risks associated with poor sleeping habits range from high blood pressure to possibly heart disease and stroke.

In 2007, the RVH Sleep Apnea Study Laboratory expanded to a five-bed unit, notes RVH's Vice-President of Corporate Services, Julia Boudreau. "Since that time, we have been experiencing a waiting list." Hence, the hospital reviewed and supported a decision to expand the sleep laboratory to six beds last fall.

"An expansion such as this involves adding staff, as well as equipment—it meant an investment by the hospital to equip the sixth bed, update the lab's computer system, and complete renovations to accommodate the sixth bed, as well as redesign the space needed by the staff who supervise the patients over night," she says of the changes on the third floor.

The lab has also expanded its operation hours from five days a week to seven, providing accommodations for 11 additional patients every week.

"This is a significant increase in light of the catchment area we serve. As a result of the expansion, patients requiring the testing will be scheduled for a test more quickly, which, in turn, will contribute to improved patient care," comments Boudreau, adding that patients will experience faster interpretation of the test results, diagnosis from the physician and recommended treatments.

Rachel Leclair, a Registered Respiratory Therapist and RVH's Manager of the Sleep Laboratory, says there are now three full-time staff members, three regular part-time and she will soon be hiring additional casual staff for the laboratory.

The expansion has resulted in a major lifestyle change for Melissa Yolkowskie, one of the sleep technicians. For the past 11 years she has worked the night shift in the lab. In December, she switched to more daytime hours to assist in interpreting the extra data.

"It takes about one hour per patient file to interpret their data," she notes, adding that the software system upgrade is helping technicians keep up with the increased workflow.

Along with managing operations in the lab, Leclair provides consultations and

follow-up appointments with clients in the Sleep Products store, which sells equipment related to sleep apnea. "We always have equipment in stock to help patients with their prescribed therapy," she notes.

"The staff are always very helpful and they're available to help with any questions I may have and get back to me quickly if I leave a phone message," says Sleep Products client Larry Thivierge. "I've been very impressed with the all of the various services they provide."

New store hours are: Monday to Wednesday, 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. To contact the Sleep Products store, call 613-432-8259. A physician's referral is needed for testing in the Sleep Lab.



**RVH Respiratory Therapist Rachel Leclair conducts a consultation with patient Larry Thivierge in the Sleep Laboratory.**