

GRAND ROUNDS

Blessed to receive care close to home

Sandra Riopelle knows firsthand the value and comfort of being able to access quality care close to home.

“I feel blessed to have been able to be so close to home to have my chemotherapy...there’s nothing better than that small-town, family feeling,” she shares.

After finding a lump in her breast and quickly making an appointment with her gynecologist, Riopelle admits her head was swimming with thoughts of dying in November 2011. Following a biopsy, she was officially diagnosed with breast cancer on December 17 that same year.

Her surgery was completed in Ottawa and when the staging and grading came back it was determined that she was ER+ PR+ and Her2 +. In other words, her cancer was aggressive and growing fast and would require four rounds of chemotherapy along with 21 radiation and 17 Herceptin treatments.

“My medical oncologist was thrilled when he learned that I lived in Renfrew because he had heard so many great things about our oncology unit and hospital,” recalls Riopelle.

What he had heard was indicative of the care she would receive.

“My nurses and the front desk receptionist were always kind, considerate, compassionate, and genuinely cared about how I was doing...even till today when I see the nurse, she always asks how things are with me, and if I have a question or just need an ear she is there.”

Riopelle, who is six years cancer free as of August 2018, has been back to visit the new oncology unit on the first floor at RVH and while it is a wonderful, modern space, she has no intention of ever being there for treatments... “but if I needed to, there isn’t a doubt I’m my mind that I would ever go anywhere else but RVH.”

Donations to the RVH Foundation and participation in the ‘Put Your Breast Foot Forward’ walk/run supporting the RVH oncology department are her way to say thanks to RVH “for making the most difficult time in my life, a calm, caring and relaxing time.”



Erin Prentice, RVH oncology nurse, and Sandra Riopelle, cancer survivor, both took part in the Put Your “Breast” foot forward walk/run on September 30 to help raise funds for the RVH Oncology Department.