

Talk it up Victoria



Renfrew Victoria Hospital

Your Community Healthcare Centre

Volume Five, Number Four

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Renfrew Victoria – your senior-friendly hospital

Senior friendly hospitals.

It's a concept that has been shaped in recent years to optimize the health care provided for Ontario's senior citizens. The approach makes sense for a number of reasons:

- seniors make up the largest single population group served by hospitals
- hospital stays tend to be longer for seniors than they are for other people
- hospitalized seniors face higher risks for complications
- an acute hospitalization can be a crucial and pivotal point in a senior's life, leading to permanent loss of independence
- correctly assessing seniors' needs and dealing with them can help maintain their independence
- as the Baby Boomers age, meeting the needs of an expanding senior population is going to be the biggest challenge facing our health care system.

So, how has Renfrew Victoria Hospital (RVH) made itself senior friendly?

This issue of Talk It Up Victoria will highlight some of the services available for seniors at RVH. We will focus on the expertise our staff has developed in this important area of medical care. And we'll provide you with tips on how you can stay healthier longer as an independent senior, or how you can support the senior citizens in your life.



Registered Practical Nurse Jennifer Pappin shares a smile as she cares for Carmen Gregoire in the dialysis unit.

Making sure RVH is a friendly place for seniors

Earlier this year, Renfrew Victoria Hospital was put to the test by Patricia Barr, an occupational therapist and the Senior Friendly hospital consultant for the Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario.

She toured the hospital's emergency department and third-floor facilities for complex continuing care, assessing how they meet the needs of senior citizens.

So, is RVH senior friendly?

"Absolutely," responds Barr. "What I loved about the hospital is the overall impression. It's visually pleasing. You're not bombarded with signs and posters, and there is no overhead paging system interrupting conversations."

During the audit, Barr looked at everything from lighting and signage to flooring, furniture and washroom accessibility. In all, 71 items were reviewed.

"Anything that needs to be done is really a matter of tweaking," says Barr, pointing to recommendations such as

providing some raised chairs, painting doorframes a different colour than the walls, and adding directional signs.

The report has been reviewed by the managers and care teams at the hospital, as well as the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee of the RVH Board.

Many of the recommendations have already been met. For example, faucet and door handles have been changed from knobs to levers, which are easier to grip. Hearing amplifiers have been purchased and are on hand in the emergency department for patients who have trouble hearing.

Lynn Campbell, nurse manager of the complex continuing care unit, says the process was very helpful.

"It's always a good thing to have that objective person's view and to look at things through a different person's eyes," she says. "It told us that we're going in the right direction, and we'll just carry on with what we're doing."

The difficult challenge of finding the right placement for everyone

A young family is rushed into the emergency department following a car accident. Two of them require hospitalization, but there are no beds available. They spend the night on stretchers in the emergency room, receiving the best care available but lacking the privacy and quiet rest a room would provide.

This story has nothing to do with seniors' health care needs, right?

Wrong.

The growing number of seniors and their increasingly complex care requirements can create hospital bed shortages.

Often, aging patients remain in hospital longer than required through no fault of their own. They do not need the acute care a hospital provides, but they are not well enough to return to their previous living arrangement. They get "stuck" in what the system calls "alternate level of care" (ALC) beds, waiting for an available spot in a nursing home or assisted living residence.

Hospitals throughout the country are trying to come to grips with the problem in a variety of ways.

Some RVH practices are now serving as models for other facilities.

Here's an overview of how RVH is meeting the challenge:

RAPID Cycle Beds

Developed as a pilot project at RVH two years ago, the RAPID stands for "Rapidly Assess, Plan, Implement and Discharge", and the goal is to establish a team approach to reduce emergency department overcrowding and unnecessary extended hospital stays.

The approach begins in the emergency department, identifying patients who could be at risk for return or extended hospitalizations. Those patients are then aggressively monitored with the goal of getting them home as quickly as possible with the appropriate supports to make their recovery a success.

Geriatric care clinics

Geriatricians from Ottawa provide clinics at RVH on a regular basis. Patients are referred to their specialized care by family doctors or through the regional geriatric assessment

program. Specially trained staff with the Renfrew County Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) begin the process with a home visit where they have a first-hand view of the person's living arrangements and are able to gain input from the senior on his or her personal goals.

"It is a true team effort that pools all of our resources," comments Cal Martel, director of the Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario.



CCAC Case Manager Karen Pritchard works on-site at RVH, planning long-term care solutions for patients like Ruby Hein.

New telehealth service focuses on eye procedures

A new pre-surgery telehealth connection with Ottawa ophthalmologists has put RVH at the leading edge of video health consultations.

Introduced this fall, the new partnership with the Ottawa Hospital Eye Care Centre eliminates the need for local cataract sufferers to travel to Ottawa for their pre-surgery consultations.

The first such program in Ontario, it is expected to be a model for other regions because of its effectiveness in making care more accessible to rural patients.

The telehealth connection links the patient with medical personnel in Ottawa for a 40- to 50-minute session. They review medications and the patient's medical history, and provide instructions for pre-op preparations and post-surgical care. A nurse in Renfrew measures the eye and provides the

information to the Ottawa team, so that everything is ready to go when the patient arrives the morning of their surgery.

RVH Nurses Lucille Bilmer and Donna McParland report that patients are extremely happy with the development.

"It means they don't have to impose on someone to take them to Ottawa. They don't lose the better part of a day travelling for an appointment that takes less than an hour, and they don't have the expense of getting there, parking, and getting meals," says McParland.

"Once they get used to talking to the TV screen, they just love it."

About 1,000 of the Eye Care Centre's patients are from the Renfrew area.

"This is going to have a huge impact," concludes Bilmer.

Exercise your brain to keep it powerful

Roxanne Nolan has a simple message for senior citizens facing the long, lonely winter months ahead:

- **Be as active as you can possibly be.**

As the recreationist at Renfrew Victoria Hospital, she is responsible for activities, social events and outings offered for patients on the complex continuing care unit.

“We play a lot of games to keep our minds active,” she says, noting that most of the contests involve teams so that no one is put on the spot.

Current events are also discussed.

“When their family comes in, they have information. They have things to talk about with them,” Nolan comments.

She recommends that seniors living at home adopt the same practices.

Here are her top tips for seniors who want to stay sharp:

- read a newspaper on a regular basis
- play along with Jeopardy and other television game shows
- visit with others – on the phone or, whenever possible, in person
- go to church – it feeds your spirit and keeps you in good company.

She explains that church attendance does more than provide the expected spiritual lift. It also features built-in memory prompts, such as providing a reason to note the days of the week.

“It can get too easy to let the calendar slip by,” Nolan comments.

“It is also a connection to what has been important in their lives,” she adds.

“The important thing is to get out of your home and be active in whatever your interests are,” Nolan says. “The more you stay in, the smaller your world becomes.”

For those who are housebound by the weather or mobility problems, she has an equally important suggestion.

“Bring others in to you,” she says. “Invite family, friends or neighbours in for a coffee or tea.”



Patient Margaret Leclaire enjoys a chuckle with RVH Recreationist Roxanne Nolan as they tackle a newspaper puzzle.

Why you may no longer sleep like a baby

Sleep patterns are one of the many changes experienced by our bodies as we age.

Those long, deep sleeps that were so welcome at the end of a hard day's work may give way to less satisfying rests and frequent interruptions.

Rachel Leclaire, the technician in RVH's sleep disorders lab, says the reasons for restless nights vary.

The RVH lab specializes in the diagnosis and monitoring of sleep apnea, a condition in which a person repeatedly stops breathing during sleep. While the incidence of apnea increases with age, Leclaire says there are many other factors that affect seniors' sleep habits, including:

- the side-effects of medication
- chronic pain, being roused by stiff or aching muscles or joints
- restless leg syndrome, and
- anxiety due to lifestyle changes such as medical conditions or the loss of a spouse.

Here's how you can help yourself rest easy:

- Go with the flow. If you aren't feeling any negative effects, don't worry if your sleep habits change over time – many age-related sleep changes are normal.

- Discuss any problems with your doctor. Your physician is your first resource for information about the potential side-effects of medication or sleep disorders. They can refer you to the RVH sleep lab if that is indicated.
- Discuss hot flashes or night sweats with your doctor. There are tried-and-true ways to reduce their effects.
- Be active, eat well and exercise. Good overall health and activity contribute to good sleep.
- Treat yourself well. If the 11 p.m. news gets you upset, wait until morning to catch up on current events. Try reading a good book instead.
- Adopt a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed at a similar time each night, and get in the habit of sleeping well.
- Set your own rules for napping. Many seniors enjoy a good afternoon nap. However, it is important to realize that a sleep during the day may make you less inclined to sleep at night. If you are having trouble with night-time sleep, try eliminating the nap.

Keeping muscles strong is an important part of healthy aging

Shawn Silver knows exactly what loss of muscle strength can do to a senior.

“Excellent examples are simply stumbling over a crack in the sidewalk or being bumped while shopping by a fellow shopper,” says the RVH physiotherapist. “As 20-year-olds, we would recover from the challenges without incident, but with less muscle mass and less recent exposure to challenges, we have more difficulty.”

Generally, seniors tend to perform less “explosive” type activities. While they can get along quite nicely in their daily routines, there is less reserve available when extra requirements pop up.

The large muscle groups, such as the quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, deltoids and upper arms, are most affected.

With that in mind, Silver has put together two groups of exercises for seniors to follow. The goal is to keep your large muscle groups active and strong.

Please note: Exercises should not cause any pain, although soreness or fatigue may occur as your muscles develop. If you experience pain as you try the following routine, please seek the assistance and advice of a health professional.

Repeated sit to stands



- Stand up and then sit down **SLOWLY** on a chair.
 - For the hearty: Make this exercise more difficult by not allowing yourself to use your hands.
 - As you gain strength: Use a lower chair.
- Repeat 6 to 15 times.*

Toe raises

- Stand with support available if needed. Try to use as little support as possible, but always have it available “just in case”.
- Push up on your toes.
- As you gain strength: When able to perform 12 at full range, try using only one foot.

Repeat 6 to 12 times.



Bridging

- Lie on your back with your knees bent.
- Squeeze your buttocks together and lift your bottom off the floor.
- Hold for three seconds, then return to the starting position.
- As you gain strength: Try performing this exercise with one leg straight, and alternate legs.

Repeat 6 to 12 times.



Standing knee flexion

- Stand with support available.
 - Put a two-kilogram weight around your ankle.
 - Hold onto the support and bring one leg slightly backwards.
 - Bend your knee and lift your foot off the floor.
 - Hold for three seconds.
- Repeat 8 to 12 times.*



Seated knee extension

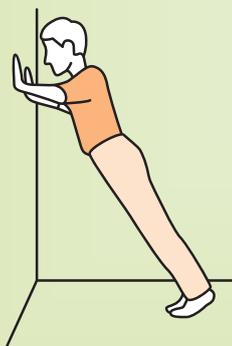
- Sit up tall in a chair, with a cushion (or rolled towel) under your knee and a two-kilogram weight on your ankle.
 - Pull your toes up, tighten the front of your thigh muscle and straighten your knee slowly.
 - Hold for approximately five seconds.
- Repeat 8 to 12 times.*



For those who would like to add to their upper body strength, replace the last two exercises in the series with:

Wall push-ups

- Stand facing a wall with your arms straight ahead of you, hands on the wall.
 - Do push-ups against the wall, keeping your body in a straight line.
- Repeat 6 to 15 times.*



Arm curls

- Stand with arms hanging down.
 - Hold two-kilogram hand-weights (soup cans work perfectly), and turn your palms forward.
 - Bend alternate elbows briskly.
- Repeat 8 to 15 times.*



Talk it up Victoria - the Renfrew Victoria Hospital newsletter

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CARING *for* TOMORROW

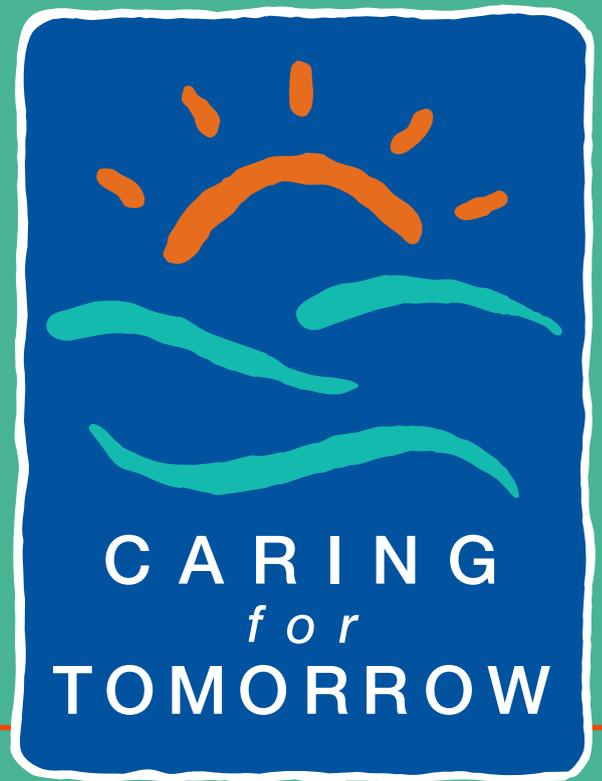
News from the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation

If you would like to learn more about the various ways you can contribute to Renfrew Victoria Hospital, please contact us:

Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation, 499 Raglan Street North,

Renfrew, Ontario K7V 1P6

Phone: (613) 432-4851, ext. 263



Community spirit shines bright in the Tree of Lights



Local children and adults braved the rain to participate in this year's Tree of Lights ceremony in Low Square. The brightly lit tree raised festive spirits, while Santa and a gingerbread cookie made it an event to remember.

Photos by Pam Coulas



The Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation offers its sincere gratitude to everyone who helped make this year's Tree of Lights campaign such a phenomenal success.

As we go to press with this issue of the newsletter, more than \$70,000 has been contributed to the campaign, and donations continue to arrive.

This year, the funds will be used to assist in the purchase of new equipment to screen for breast and colon cancer. The new equipment will enhance RVH caregivers' abilities to screen for these types of cancers, assisting them to provide the earliest possible interventions for patients.

Over the past 15 years, the Tree of Lights campaign has contributed more than \$700,000 to the hospital foundation's funds.

"It's just phenomenal," comments RVH Foundation Chair Jim Lemenchick. "The constant level of support is so heartening. It really tells our team at the hospital that what they do matters. Their community truly cares."

The fund-raising campaign is the only plea RVH makes to the general community each year. If you have not yet taken the opportunity to join this important endeavour, please consider making a contribution to your hospital.

"The people of this area are proud of their hospital," comments RVH Foundation Director Barbara Symington. "And they are rightfully proud. Renfrew Victoria Hospital sets the standard for excellence in community hospital care, and it is the ongoing support of our community that makes that possible."

Renfrew's grand tour gets rave reviews

Nearly 300 people accepted our invitation to tour some of Renfrew's more interesting homes and buildings this fall.

The RVH Auxiliary house tour was a popular pre-Christmas event, offering a glimpse of both heritage and modern homes around town as well as the chance to savour the work of local artists.



Visitors could explore to their hearts delight, whether their taste ran to the stately elegance of the Bossy home on Raglan Street South, the spaciousness and history of the Deslaurier home up the street, the coziness of the Thompson home near the hospital, the open spaces of the Murray home on Haramis Drive, or the clean, bright environment in the nearby Blandford home.

Those interested in experiencing building recycling enjoyed touring the Renfrew Corporate Centre. Originally an elementary school, the building now operates as a successful commercial office complex. The gymnasium-turned-fitness-centre and the trendy Recess Cafe are state-of-the-art examples of how our history can come to life. The cafe provided the perfect backdrop to the works of the Renfrew Art Guild members who added their artistic touch to our tour.

And if all that touring made our guests hungry, they were quickly satisfied in our newly-renovated hospital cafeteria, Cafe Victoria, where high tea was served throughout the afternoon.

The Deslaurier house was a popular stop on the RVH Auxiliary house tour.

Garden stones offer a new way to show your support

Every true gardener knows that winter's snowfalls cannot stand in the way of the next big landscaping project. They just provide the quiet time necessary to plan and prepare.

Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation members already know where the shovels will dig first next spring.

They're planning a commemorative walk leading up to the hospital's front door. Garden stones will mark the path, and can be purchased for a donation of \$500 to the foundation.

Inscriptions in the stone will recognize your contribution and pay tribute to anyone you would like to honour.

This is an extension of the very successful brick campaign that provides a permanent indoor display of RVH supporters.

"We've had a number of people ask to buy a brick, and we just don't have the room," explains RVH Foundation Director Barbara Symington. "We thought this would be a very nice extension to that concept."

Anyone interested in purchasing a garden stone is invited to contact the RVH Foundation office at 613-432-4851.

Horton gives a whole lot!

Bravo to the citizens of Horton Township, who have just completed their five-year fund-raising pledge for RVH.

Under the skilled leadership of Anne Andrecheck and Bruce Reid, an impressive team of 92 volunteers raised an amazing \$92,124.87 for the RVH Foundation.

Thank you to everyone for the tremendous support our hospital receives, and thank you to the people of Horton Township on this significant achievement and the true leadership you've shown!

RVH COURT OF GOOD PRACTICES YOUR TICKET TO FREE PARKING

DATE OF EVENT

Any day of the year

TIME OF EVENT

Any time, day or night

MAKE OF VEHICLE

Unimportant – all are welcome, from the smallest SmartCar to the biggest family van

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

Motorist enjoyed free parking, for the entire length of their visit to the hospital. No limits. No fees. No hassles.

SET FINE AMOUNT

Absolutely nothing.

COMMENTS

Have you stopped to think about the convenience visitors enjoy each time they come to RVH?

We are one of the few hospitals left in Ontario that does not charge for parking.

Yet we face the same costs as every other facility — maintaining the curbs and pavement, removing the snow, sanding and salting, painting...

We are able to meet those costs because your hospital maintains a solid financial footing. However, you should be aware that each dollar spent on maintaining our parking facilities could be spent on direct patient care.

If you would like to make a donation to help defray the costs of maintaining our parking lot, please visit the RVH Foundation office in the administration wing of the hospital. You can phone the office at 613-432-4851, ext. 263, or you can reach us through the RVH website at www.renfrewhosp.com