

## Get ready — construction is coming to RVH

Renfrew Victoria Hospital is about to grow again. The planning process for a world-class nephrology centre in Renfrew is now in full swing after an announcement was made in late August that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will invest \$12 million in RVH to upgrade and expand its hemodialysis unit.

“Every week we treat 109 patients with these life-saving treatments,” noted RVH CEO and President Randy Penney at the press conference. The unit is currently running at full capacity and the expansion is required to deal with growth.

In 1993, RVH began the program by opening a dialysis unit with four stations and has grown to the current 14-station unit on the main level of the hospital.

Dialysis is a requirement for patients with chronic or acute renal failure. Their kidneys no longer function properly so the patient is connected to a machine that will clean their blood of waste products and fluid. The patient is connected to the machine by a fistula or graft in a large arm vein or by a central line in a large vein in their neck. This process lasts approximately four hours per treatment and is needed at least three times per week.

Expanding services for kidney disease patients in this community is essential—Penney explains that we have staggeringly high rates of polycystic kidney disease, and due to its hereditary nature the statistics won't be declining any time soon.

“We're dealing with a very unique phenomenon. In Ontario, the rate of polycystic kidney disease is six per cent. We're looking at 25 per cent here in Renfrew County,” Penney points out.

RVH also offers a Peritoneal Dialysis (PD) program that provides telemedicine consultation and services to patients who choose home care treatments.



The current 14-station dialysis unit at RVH.

“We've had a lot of success with the PD program and we're very excited about it because we'll be able to expand the program in the new space,” says Penney.

At the moment, different parts of the nephrology programs are running in different buildings—hemodialysis on the main floor at the front of the hospital and peritoneal dialysis is offered in a separate building at the back with clinics held in various meeting rooms. The same nephrologists can be running a clinic, covering the hemodialysis unit, and seeing a consult on the inpatient unit, all in the same day.

This means time is lost while they move between buildings to see different patients in different areas. Sometimes it can mean lon-

ger waiting times for patients in the clinic, for example, says Janice Verch-Whittington, RVH's Clinical Manager of Nephrology.

“The expansion will allow the nephrology team made up of nephrologists, technologists, nurses, pharmacists, a social worker, dietitian, and other care specialists to easily work with several different groups of patients all in the course of their day,” she adds.

At this stage, the management team is working on final drawings and necessary approvals, but Penney says he could see a shovel in the ground within a year. The actual construction could take up to two years to complete.

Of the estimated \$12 million total project cost, \$10 million will come from the

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to cover the infrastructure. “This is the largest investment the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has made in RVH since the original construction of our hospital,” says Penney.

The other \$2 million must come from the hospital. RVH will dip into its reserves to pay its portion, which covers all furnishings and equipment. The community is invited to donate to the RVH Foundation to help support the new state-of-the-art nephrology centre.

“Getting this project underway is a major achievement for our organization that will significantly improve our hospital,” concludes Penney.



Dr. Amtul Musawir and Dr. Nicole Delbrouck, RVH Nephrologists.

“[The \$12 million funding announcement] is right over the top. Our patients have already benefitted tremendously from the current programs. This news means we'll be able to continue bringing enhanced programming to Renfrew.”

—Dr. Nicole Delbrouck, RVH Nephrologist, at the August press conference

“This new unit is very exciting for us. Having all of the PRI patients, diabetic classes and private consultation rooms together on the second level will drastically improve our efficiency and increase the number of patients we will be able to see in a day. We're also pleased for the patients who will be able to enjoy the outdoor scenery through large windows in every area. Even their families can look forward to more spacious comfortable waiting areas. Not only are we looking forward to a beautiful new space, but a much safer dedicated space for our patients and staff.”

—Dr. Amtul Musawir, RVH Nephrologist

# The importance of care close to home

We hear time and time again from patients who receive care closer to home what a difference this makes on their energy level, and their ability to feel normal, even though they need dialysis treatments.

One patient told us very excitedly after she was transferred to a satellite close to her home, that her husband and teenage sons were so happy, Mom was home more, she had more energy and was now back to one of her favourite pastimes of cooking and baking for them. She felt like that part of her life was more meaningful, and that she was contributing to her family life. When she had to travel she was often too tired to do that.

All patients in the dialysis unit spend a minimum of 12 hours every week hooked up to a machine receiving life-saving treatments.

On top of the time spent on dialysis, Dolores Losier added an extra two hours commuting to the hospital, which meant there wasn't much time left for a life outside of dialysis.

She and her husband of the past 51 years, George, recently moved into town after driving every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning from Golden Lake to RVH.



Dolores and George Losier list many benefits of receiving dialysis treatments close to home.

**"They treat you like family."**

—Dolores Losier

"It was a seven- to eight-hour day," Dolores says. "In the winter we would leave in the dark, on roads that hadn't been plowed yet."

George would find a spot in a chair next to her and wait for the four hours or take the time to get their groceries and tend to other errands in town.

The retired couple relocated to Renfrew in May so Dolores could be closer to the dialysis unit and her doctor. The wear and tear on their vehicle, along with the rising cost of fuel made the decision an easy one for them.

"Now he drops me off and heads back home," says Dolores of their new arrangement.

She began treatments in June 2008 and started out driving to the satellite unit in Barry's Bay, but ended up needing to have the nephrologists monitor her during treatments and was sent to Renfrew.

Her body doesn't tolerate the treatments very well compared to other patients, and the long drive back and forth to their old home wasn't helping the situation.

"I get very tired afterward and I sleep most of the afternoon, it was very hard for George to help me out of the car after we got home when we were in Golden Lake."

Now the five-minute drive to their home is much easier on her and her husband, she says.

The time actually spent sitting at the station while her blood is pumped through the dialyzing machine goes by quickly for her she says; "I watch TV or take a nap."

And she looks forward to the entertainment provided by the care team—they decorate the space during special occasions and even Santa makes a visit to all of the dialysis patients at Christmas time.

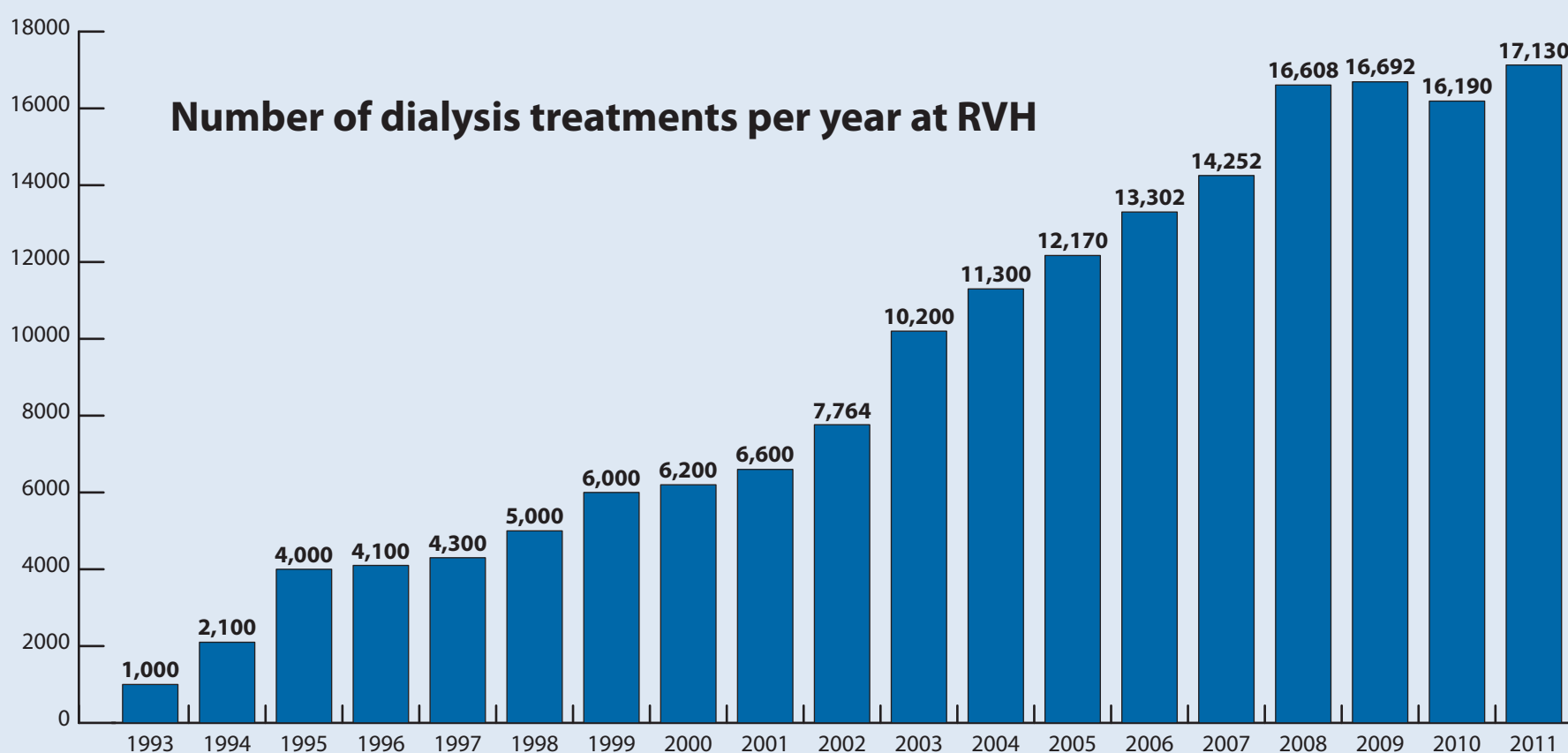
"The nurses often get going on about something or another too, sometimes you are laughing so hard," she adds.

The staff has been wonderful to her and George. Dolores says, "After you are here a while, they treat you like family."

While all the details of the new expansion haven't been finalized yet, it is exciting to know there will be additional stations to treat patients close to home, more space for those patients and their families at each station and that same warm care and quality service will be transferred to the expanded nephrology centre.

"This expansion is a great opportunity for growth and to provide an ongoing excellent standard of care. It is challenging to work in the current space with a limited amount of room for day-to-day activity. With so many patients, nurses and specialists often in the unit at the same time, there is never enough room. My co-workers and I are also grateful to have separate rooms in the design for our isolation patients to further help prevent the chance of cross contamination. The patients and staff are all very excited and ready to move forward."

—Joyce Mulvihill, Registered Nurse in the hemodialysis unit (25 year employee of RVH)



# Attention to details

Local architect Brian Dickey has met with hospital management on numerous occasions to ensure all the needs of staff and patients are being incorporated into the design and that every inch of space is fully utilized and follows the guidelines for infection control.

The proposal for the new two-storey addition will provide significantly more square feet to the hospital. It will be conveniently located next to the emergency department and feature 20 hemodialysis stations for patients on the main floor. On the upper level, current plans include space for a peritoneal dialysis suite and predialysis clinics, pharmacy, diabetes education program activity space, exam rooms and reception area, teaching space, clinical storage, materials management space, consultant office space plus other shared office space for visiting physicians.

Since the nephrology centre will be added to the back of the building, design plans also include reconfiguring and improving parking space next to the emergency department.

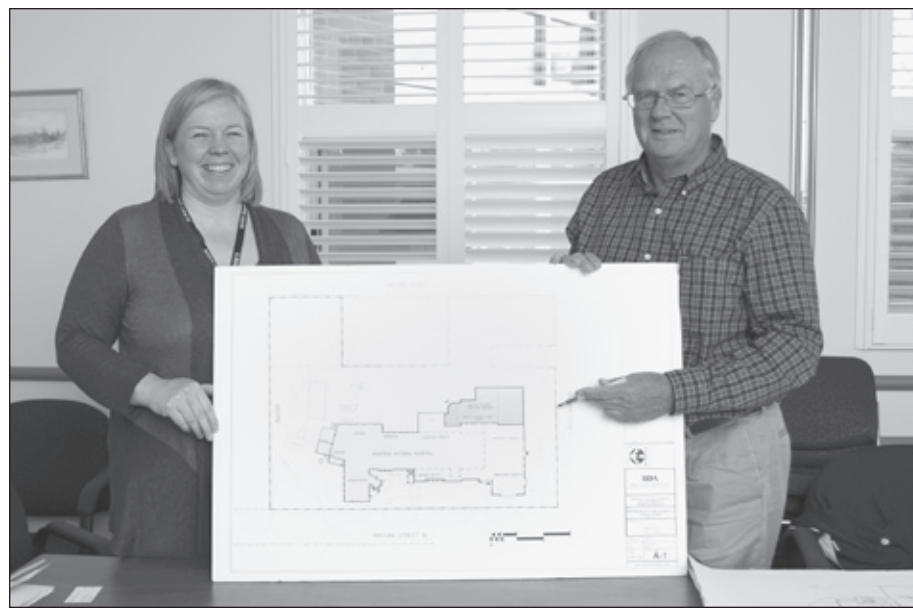
“We’re really excited about the new unit,” says Christene Ferguson, Vice-President of Patient Care Services. “But most importantly, our patients are excited about the expansion.”

Patients arriving for treatment will have a comfortable waiting room to wait in, as will their families and drivers who regularly wait three to four hours while their loved one is receiving their dialysis treatment.

“More and more patients require a separate room for dialysis and the new unit will allow us to provide each patient the appropriate space in our unit,” says Janice Verch-Whittington, RVH’s Clinical Manager of Nephrology.

Those receiving treatments in the main area can look forward to a view out the window from every station.

The nurses’ station will be placed in the centre of all of the equipment, instead of off to one side as it is now. This will allow for faster response times to their patients.



Janice Verch-Whittington, RVH Clinical Manager of Nephrology and local architect Brian Dickey show the planned nephrology expansion at the back of the existing RVH emergency department.

“Staff and patients will have more appropriate space to work in and there will be an increased distance between patient stations to assist us in providing care and ensuring confidentiality and privacy,” comments

Verch-Whittington. Sometimes patients don’t feel comfortable talking to the health care providers because the next patient is so close and can hear everything. “So, this will be another improvement in the new unit.”

## The RVH nephrology program comprises:

- Two Nephrologists
- One General Practitioner educated with additional knowledge and experience in hemodialysis in Renfrew, two General Practitioners in Barry’s Bay
- Twenty-nine Registered Nurses
- Ten Registered Practical Nurses
- Two Dialysis Technologists
- A Biomedical Technologist
- Two Dietitians
- A Social Worker

## Additional program support is provided by:

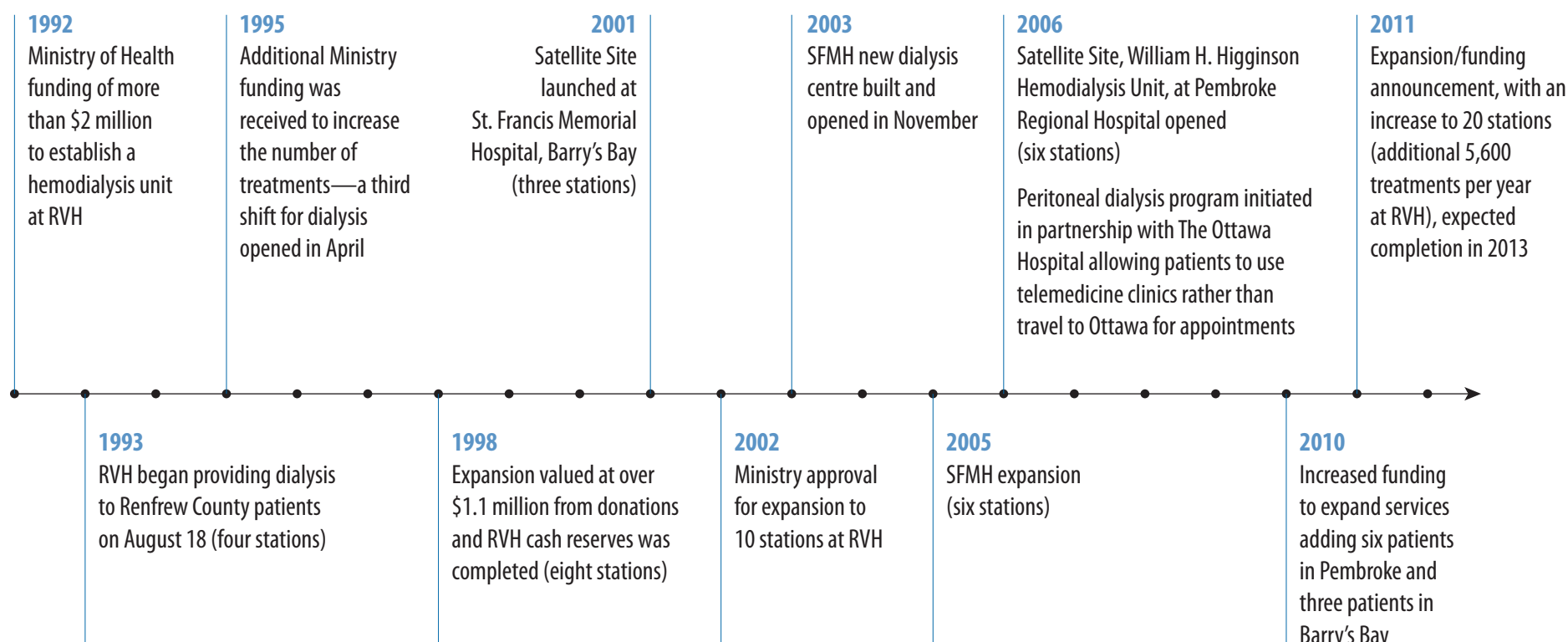
- Pharmacy
- Two Radiologists who provide colour Doppler for vascular studies, fistulograms, ultrasounds, etc.,
- General Surgeon
- Information Technologist who maintains a telehealth platform for linkages to the satellites for physician visits and education

## QUICK FACTS

- Once people have 15 per cent or less function of their kidneys, they need to go on dialysis or have a transplant
- Renal failure can be caused by specific kidney diseases or as a complication of other conditions such as diabetes
- Hemodialysis is a treatment normally provided three times per week to replace lost kidney function in people with renal failure. Over a period of a few hours, the patient’s blood is pumped through a machine that removes wastes and excess water
- The cost of dialysis treatment to the health system per dialysis patient per year is \$33,000
- RVH, SFMH and PRH are all affiliates of the Ontario Renal Network: <http://www.renalnetwork.on.ca/>
- RVH also operates a peritoneal dialysis program and a busy pre-renal insufficiency (PRI) clinic that follows approximately 90 patients in early stages of kidney disease who don’t yet require dialysis
- Current number of patients treated in our county: 109. The number of patients projected by 2017: 175
- March is Kidney Health Month across Canada, but attention should be paid to kidney health year-round
- Some high-risk factors for kidney disease include: diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure
- A Statistics Canada, Health Profile 2011 for Renfrew County indicates:

Overweight/obese adults	61%
High blood pressure	20.4%
Diabetes	8.2%

## How we grew





The second annual barbecue and bake sale hosted by Blue Energy and Gourley's Variety and Gas Bar on Saturday, November 5 was a huge success. Funds raised will be added to the campaign to pay for a \$700,000 mammography unit that is scheduled to be up and running by February 2012. The volunteer barbecue crew, above, consists of Brent Leech, Steve Cahill, Matt Cahill, Kyle Rowley and Dave 'The Mule' Gallagher.

Photo courtesy The Renfrew Mercury



Auxiliary members answered the "call to action" to stuff Christmas cards for this year's Tree of Lights campaign, which will support the new Digital Mammography project. Card artist, Kathryn Spooner Bossy, second from left, joins in.



# Call to Action

Renfrew Victoria Hospital works hard to effectively communicate with our community and surrounding areas to keep everyone informed of various matters relating to RVH. This is done through print, radio, online, speaking engagements and other communication vehicles.

Despite this, it was felt that there is still so much to share with the public. The project of upgrading to digital mammography was a starting point for a unique initiative.

Launched in the spring, the Call to Action initiative to empower women and men in our community with knowledge about breast health and screening programs is falling into place.

Those attending initial information sessions were asked to consider getting more involved in helping to spread the word. To date, Annette Miller, Cecie Whalen, Sandra Beimers and others have taken action and come forward to champion the cause.

In taking ownership of the Digital Mammography Project at RVH, these leaders in our community have enriched public knowledge to enable informed investments in health care.

Call to Action/Digital Mammography Fund events to date include:

- **Television interview.** Cecie Whalen and Debbie Tierney, RVH Mammographer, travelled to Ottawa to be interviewed by Lianne Lang on the CTV Morning

Live program on October 12. Cecie and Debbie spoke about reaching out to the community so that people will become involved and educated with all the facts about breast health and screening. These two great ambassadors of the project also talked about digital mammography and what it will mean to the Diagnostic Imaging Department—for example, digital records that can be shared electronically with specialists and the ability to see more patients.

- **Run/Walk for Digital Mammography on October 15.** The route that began and ended on the main street of downtown Renfrew with a very noticeable police escort raised both awareness and funds. More than 80 participants walked their way to \$5,000 for the project. A highlight of the day was the Cougars Conquering Cancer donation of more than \$40,000.
- **Home Hardware "Unwrapping Christmas Early" event on October 18.** In addition to a preview of this year's seasonal items in the store, a bake sale and a craft "make and take" table helped round out the evening's fundraising for the digital mammography fund to \$2,300 this year.
- **Barbecue and bake sale hosted by Blue Energy and Gourley's Variety and Gas Bar on November 5.** The second annual event raised \$2,360 for the Digital Mammography Fund at RVH.

## A donation in memory

It is the time of year that we often think of someone special. One daughter remembering her mom has been doing this all year.

In an effort to raise funds for the Dialysis Unit, Debbie creates handmade cards in memory of her mother and sells them in the RVH gift shop.

All proceeds go to the Dialysis Unit, Renfrew Victoria Hospital.

When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.

—Author Unknown



## Think outside the box!

As we advance toward the festive social season, we invite you to take a cue from the RVH Auxiliary's original idea and "think outside the box".

For those challenging gifts you need to buy, please consider making a donation to the RVH Tree of Lights campaign to honour the recipient. It's a gift that will benefit our entire community, and help us deliver quality health care to the people of Renfrew.

Thank you for making us confident enough to "think outside the box" as we continue to expand the health services we provide! For information, please call the RVH Foundation office at 613-432-4851, ext. 263.

## 2011 Tree of Lights Saturday, December 3, 6:00 p.m., Low Square, Renfrew

This is your invitation to join the festivities, including music, refreshments and, of course, the lighting of more than 1,500 twinkling bulbs on the tree.

In keeping with the focus of our first Call to Action initiative on breast health for life, the funds from this year's Tree of Lights will go directly to the RVH Digital Mammography Project. This state-of-the-art technology will cost upwards of \$700,000 with no government funding available.



**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](http://www.rvhfoundation.com) to learn more about how you can contribute to the RVH difference.