

January 17, 2018

## RVH celebrates opening of Simcoe Muskoka Regional Heart Program

Advanced cardiac care is now available in North Simcoe Muskoka, ensuring heart patients have the same quick access to lifesaving heart services as people throughout the rest of Ontario.

Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Dr. Eric Hoskins were at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) this morning to celebrate the opening of the Simcoe Muskoka Regional Heart program, an innovative partnership with Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Today's celebration was held in the fourth floor shelled space adjacent to the new Cardiac Intervention Unit. The bright, 16-bed, 14,300 square-foot unit includes two procedure rooms featuring first-in-Canada technology to perform cardiac angiograms and angioplasty.

"When it comes to the heart, time is muscle. Having advanced cardiac services available at RVH will not only be a game-changer for heart patients in our region, it will be lifesaver," says Janice Skot, RVH president and CEO, noting the program was developed with invaluable feedback from RVH's hospital and paramedic partners, as well as the important perspective of the cardiac Patient Family Advisory Council.

RVH's specialized cardiac team has already begun providing advanced care in the state-of-the-art unit, and in the past week performed 15 angiograms, a test to detect blockages in the heart arteries. This fall RVH will expand its cardiac services to include angioplasty, a non-surgical procedure that uses a thin flexible tube with a tiny inflatable balloon to open up a clogged heart artery.

It's important to note that not all cardiac services will be available to all patients right away. RVH has always planned for a cautious, phased ramp-up of these complex cardiac services to ensure patients throughout the region receive safe, high quality care. Complex cases will continue to be referred to other cardiac centres.

"In 2020 the heart program will operate 24/7 and paramedics will begin transporting North Simcoe Muskoka heart attack patients directly to RVH for treatment, bypassing other local emergency departments," explains Dr. Mark Kotowycz, RVH medical director, Interventional Cardiology. "Having these advanced cardiac services available at RVH means most patients in North Simcoe Muskoka will be able to get lifesaving intervention within 90 minutes of a heart attack."

Until now, North Simcoe Muskoka was the only region in the province without an advanced cardiac centre, meaning 3,600 heart patients travelled to centres outside the region for heart procedures every year. The Simcoe Muskoka Regional Heart Program will give patients access to faster treatment, a shorter hospital stay and less travel time. Complex cases, or patients requiring cardiac surgery, will continue to be referred to other heart centres.

This opening is just the latest milestone as RVH continues to expand in order to meet the needs of our growing region. In December RVH opened a 36-bed Transitional Care Unit, as well as the Simcoe Muskoka Regional Child and Youth Mental Health Unit.

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### Quotes:

"No matter where you live in Ontario, if you or a loved one suffers from a heart attack you want access to care as soon as possible. We know the first 90 minutes are critical. That's why we are supporting the new Simcoe Muskoka Regional Heart Program at RVH. Simply put, it will give patients in Barrie and across North Simcoe Muskoka a better chance not only at surviving, but getting back on their feet and back home to their family and friends."

***Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario***

“Ensuring the right care is available closer to home can make a big difference for people with heart disease. The new Cardiac Intervention Unit at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre is an exciting step forward to improve access to care for people living in North Simcoe Muskoka.”

***Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care***

"I am thrilled that acute cardiac care services are coming to Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre in Barrie, and that people in the region will now be able to access vital, lifesaving services locally. I want to thank Premier Wynne and Minister Hoskins for their commitment to this project, Janice Skot and her team at RVH for all their hard work, and everyone who has contributed to the Hearts and Minds Campaign for helping to make this a reality."

***Ann Hoggarth, MPP Barrie***

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