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RVH readies for opening Advanced Cardiac Centre

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) continues to expand its expert cardiology team as it prepares to open an Advanced Cardiac Centre, ensuring residents in Simcoe Muskoka will soon have quick access to lifesaving heart care.

In early May the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care gave the green light to RVH to develop an Advanced Cardiac program, in partnership with Southlake Regional Health Centre, and since then the health centre has aggressively moved forward with plans for a comprehensive heart program.

RVH now boasts a team of seven cardiologists which provides 24/7 cardiology coverage to ensure patients from throughout the region have access to specialized care day or night. Meanwhile, a new regional Urgent Cardiology Clinic provides speedy assessment and testing for patients who come to RVH's Emergency department or surgical pre-admission clinic and are found to be at high risk for a heart attack. In 2012, RVH opened the region's only Cardiac Care Unit (CCU), along with a dedicated 32-bed Cardiac Renal Unit.

"These are all important pieces of the puzzle and paves the way for opening the Advanced Cardiac Centre, bringing this lifesaving service closer to home," says Dr. Brad Dibble, RVH clinical director, Cardiovascular and Renal program.

"Opening the Advanced Cardiac Centre will be a game changer for heart attack patients throughout Simcoe County and Muskoka."

North Simcoe Muskoka is currently the only region in the province without an Advanced Cardiac Centre, meaning 3,600 patients must travel outside the region for heart care every year.

"Heart attack patients need to get to an Advanced Cardiac Centre as quickly as possible – ideally within 90 minutes – so angioplasty can open up the artery, remove the clot, and get blood flowing again. Due to distance, most patients outside Barrie currently can't get to a cardiac centre fast enough to receive that 'gold standard' of care," explains Dr. Dibble. "Once the Advanced Cardiac Centre opens at RVH, we will be able to perform angiograms and angioplasties in Barrie."

This partnership between RVH and Southlake Regional Health Centre ensures the two organizations are well-positioned to develop one clinically-integrated program at two different sites, leveraging skills, knowledge and resources while improving the alignment of cardiac services throughout the region.

RVH's cardiovascular team includes: Dr. Brad Dibble, Dr. Kristen Chen, Dr. Belzad Etemadi, Dr. Mohammed Haqqi, Dr. Farrukh Hussain, physician lead interventional cardiology, Dr. Kebbie Josan and Dr. Rajeev Rao. Three more cardiologists are expected to join the team by the end of the year.

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Cutline: RVH's cardiovascular team includes: Dr. Brad Dibble, RVH clinical director, Cardiovascular and Renal program; Dr. Rajeev Rao; Dr. Kristen Chen; Dr. Belzad Etemadi and Dr. Mohammed Haqqi (missing from photo Dr. Farrukh Hussain, physician lead interventional cardiology and Dr. Kebbie Josan).

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