

February 20, 2015

RVH now offers 24/7 cardiac care to Simcoe Muskoka residents

Heart patients throughout Simcoe Muskoka now have access to around-the-clock cardiac care and medical expertise at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH). The health centre's cardiovascular program recently expanded its specialized cardiac services to include 24/7 cardiology physician on-call coverage.

"This means no matter where you live in Simcoe Muskoka you now have access to very specialized cardiology expertise at RVH. This is a significant improvement for anyone in the region who suffers a heart problem," says Dr. Brad Dibble, RVH's clinical director of its cardiovascular program. "It is great news and a huge stepping stone as RVH continues to develop its advanced cardiac care program, bringing this lifesaving service closer to home. Establishing the required infrastructure and paving the way for advanced cardiac care has been a high priority for RVH since 2007."

North Simcoe Muskoka is the only region in the province that does not currently provide advanced cardiac services to its residents, meaning 3,600 patients must travel outside the region for heart care every year. The health centre continues to work closely with the provincial government and Newmarket's Southlake Regional Health Centre to develop an advanced cardiac program at RVH. The stand-alone unit will provide heart diagnostics and interventions, such as angiograms and angioplasty which are currently not available anywhere in Simcoe Muskoka.

With advanced cardiac as its highest clinical priority, RVH has built the foundation for a robust heart program. The pieces of the puzzle include the region's only Cardiac Care Unit, which provides intensive care for area heart patients, a 32-bed Cardiac Renal inpatient unit, an Urgent Cardiology Care Clinic, along with rehabilitation for cardiac patients. The next step is the specialized advanced cardiac unit which will ensure Simcoe Muskoka residents have access to the same "gold standard" of lifesaving care as patients throughout the rest of the province.

"This increase in service at RVH is great, but having advanced cardiac services here in our region is what we really need. I had to travel outside our community to get my treatment and although it went well, I know that when it comes to your heart, getting the care you need as quickly as possible is so important," says Jim Lowrie, RVH cardiac patient, who notes that this time of year travel conditions in Simcoe Muskoka can be treacherous. "I remember when the temporary radiation unit opened at RVH and for the first time we could provide cancer patients with life-saving radiation therapy close to home. There was a young mom with breast cancer who spoke at the opening and she shared how not having to travel for treatment was such a blessing -- like a weight lifted off of her shoulders. I'd like to see that kind of care close to home for heart patients as well."

Residents throughout Simcoe Muskoka will benefit from the expansion of cardiac services at RVH, including regional access to Cardiac Care Unit (CCU) beds and care by a team of seven cardiologists in the health centre's Urgent Cardiology Care Clinic.

"RVH is also in the process of purchasing new advanced diagnostic equipment and a cardiovascular reporting system that will provide our cardiologists with a comprehensive overview of their patients' cardiac journey with access from virtually anywhere in the world," says Selma Mitchell, operations director of RVH's Cardiovascular & Renal Programs, Medical & Surgical Ambulatory Care. "RVH's continues to bring advanced cardiac care to people throughout Simcoe Muskoka. This is a need, not a want, because when it comes to heart issues, time is muscle and residents need to get that life-saving cardiac care quickly."

-30-

For more Information:

Suzanne Legue
Chief Communications Officer
705-728-9090 ext. 41600

Donna Danyluk
Corporate Communications
705-728-9090 ext. 41610

About RVH:

RVH is a regional health centre in Barrie, Ontario, located 80 kilometres north of Toronto. As the largest hospital in the region of Simcoe Muskoka, RVH's team of over 350 physicians, 2,500 employees and 850 volunteers provides exceptional care and specialty services to almost half a million residents, including cancer care, stroke services, orthopedics, intensive care, mental health and interventional radiology. RVH is focused on delivering safe, high quality care that puts patients and their families first. For more information visit www.rvh.on.ca

Inspiring care...