

January 28, 2019

RVH and YMCA launch community cancer rehabilitation

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre's (RVH) cancer program and the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka have partnered to ensure cancer patients from throughout North Simcoe Muskoka now have access to rehabilitation services in the community.

"Today is truly a celebration, not just for RVH and our partners at the YMCA, but for the people who can now receive much-needed rehabilitation in the community," says Janice Skot, president and CEO, RVH. "Now our patients in active treatment or those in the survivorship stage may continue on their wellness journey by participating in the YMCA iCan Cancer Rehabilitation Program."

The 12-week YMCA iCan Cancer Rehabilitation Program, currently running at the Barrie and Innisfil YMCAs, focuses on restoring and improving physiological and psychological wellness for people dealing with cancer. Participants can expect improvement in cardiovascular function, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and range of motion as well as fatigue management. The program is modelled after the highly successful Healthy Hearts Program, another partnership between RVH and the YMCA.

"Enrolling in an exercise program following cancer treatment is extremely important for restoring physical function for daily activities. It also supports social and psychological wellbeing," says Dr. Jason Yu, medical oncologist at RVH. "In fact, Cancer Care Ontario guidelines state that exercise is beneficial for people with cancer as it improves their quality of life. It is recommended that participants perform 150 minutes of exercise a week, but any safe amount of physical activity is better than none. We take the 'meet the people where they are' approach to exercise."

All iCan trainers have completed the Thrive Health Services comprehensive cancer-specific training which includes an in-depth overview of the role of exercise in cancer survivorship. They are educated on how to facilitate behavior changes following cancer diagnosis and equipped with strategies to motivate cancer survivors to exercise. This self-referral program also includes nutritional counselling and stress management tools.

The program is available to anyone who qualifies. The cost of the program is included in a regular YMCA membership. Non-members can join at any time at the cost of a monthly YMCA membership, with their partner or caregiver receiving a free membership during the duration of the program.

"The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka has once again partnered with RVH to promote wellness and build healthy communities through access to innovative programs based on the needs of the communities we serve," said Rob Armstrong, CEO, YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka. "The YMCA's vision is to inspire people to achieve sustainable wellness. By providing cancer patients at various stages of their treatment with community rehabilitation, we are helping them reach that goal."

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Photo Attached/Cutline: Attending the official launch of the iCan program, a partnership between Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) and the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka are Rob Armstrong (left), CEO, YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka; Mayor Jeff Lehman, City of Barrie; Louanna Alexander, iCan participant; Joel Seymour, iCan specialist, YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka; Janice Skot, president and CEO, RVH and Mayor Lynn Dollin, Town of Innisfil.

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