

Expansion is ?ground-breaking? for hospital and local patients

By Peter Richardson

Headwaters Health Care Centre kicked off its much anticipated expansion and renovation with a ground-breaking ceremony last week.

Physicians, staff, volunteers and local dignitaries attended the event, which took place on Wednesday, May 26.

Referred to as a transformative expansion, the project includes the new 8,700 square foot addition, the first since the hospital opened in 1997, as well as a complete renovation of 11,900 square feet, of the existing facility.

The result will be ?a significant step towards ensuring an exceptional experience, every time, for each and every Headwaters patient? according to Chief of Staff and VP of Medical Affairs, Dr. Somaiah Ahmed

The new addition will provide space for chemotherapy and oncology services, infusion clinics, minor procedures and the expansion of telemedicine, a particular benefit for Shelburne and area residents. The service allows patients to videoconference with their doctors, or specialists without having to travel beyond Headwaters.

Assisted by a registered nurse, patients can now confer with their cardiac surgeon, or a specialist from Toronto Sick Kids in real time.

The nurse assures that the doctor receives the medical information that is needed and the patient can be one-on-one with their doctor without making the arduous trip to Toronto, for the consult or post procedure follow up.

Using this service, a patient with Parkinson's can ?see? a neurologist specializing in movement disorders and all the necessary medical data is readily provided by the attending nurse. Likewise, a recovering burn patient can be examined by his doctor through the use of a magnifying camera that allows for close-up examination of the patients burns.

Even lung transplant patients can be examined by their surgeons, using a digital stethoscope that transmits their chest sounds.

Inside the hospital, the renovations will target several areas of operation.

The reception is to be improved and the emergency department expanded, while pre- and post-surgical and recovery areas are to be updated. There will also be a new operating theatre built to help expedite patient wait times and provide better and faster service.

The project is intended to provide greater access to those healthcare services most relied upon by the community.

The resultant bright open spaces are designed to promote healing and wellness and many of the renovations will provide more ?purpose built? work areas so that staff, doctors, nurses and volunteers are provided with the very best equipment in the very best of spaces.

And while all of that is indeed good for the community, for the communities at large, like ours, another very important service will be housed in the revamped hospital, Hospital to Home, or H2H.

This highly innovative initiative places nurses in the patients home once they have left the hospital, to provide for short term nursing care needs. This provides the patient with ongoing nursing care from the same team as in the hospital.

In the beginning, the service will concentrate on cellulitis and urinary tract infection patients, requiring short term nursing interventions, but will later be expanded to include more complex needs.

When fully implemented, H2H will help prevent unnecessary admissions and shorten the stay for hospital patients. Their continuity of care will be greater and, ultimately, it is expected that the programme will enhance the patient experience, overall.

The project will be completed by Merit Construction Niagara, a firm with over 30 years' experience in full range construction projects of this type.

It will be funded on various levels, but the one most dear to the hospital's heart is the over \$16,000,000 raised by the donations from the local community through the Commitment to Care

Campaign, without which, none of the other funding would have been awarded.

Liz Ruegg, the current President and CEO of Headwaters Health Care Centre, summed the project up this way: "The hospital's expansion and renovation, will help to access important healthcare services for our growing local and surrounding communities and enable us to provide high quality care, closer to home."