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Newly renovated hemodialysis unit opens at Headwaters Health Care Centre

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Patients receiving hemodialysis treatments at Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) will now have more comfort with the recent completion of a newly renovated hemodialysis unit.

The local hospital unveiled the renovated hemodialysis unit, located in the Ambulatory Care Centre wing of Headwaters, on Friday (Oct. 4).

?We recognize the need for a more comfortable, efficient and welcoming environment to our patients. Our goal is to enhance the experience for everyone who walk through these doors; patients, family, staff and physicians alike,? said Tania Alexander, manager of Ambulatory Care and Mental Health and Addictions. ?These improvements are not just cosmetic. They reflect our ongoing commitment to patient centered care. We believe that a positive environment directly contributes to better health outcomes.?

Hemodialysis is a treatment that filters the blood of a person whose kidneys are not working normally. Hemodialysis treatments are life-sustaining for patients with end-stage kidney disease. Since treatments take up to four hours and are required three times per week in a specialized treatment chair, patient comfort is a priority.

Construction on the renovated hemodialysis unit began at the start of the year. Key features of the renovated hemodialysis unit include:

? A return to its original location on the hospital's main level within the Ambulatory Care wing. The unit will have direct access from a patient drop-off area adjacent to the hospital

? The capacity to expand to nine stations, capable of treating up to 54 patients annually. To support the longer-term needs of the community, the unit will also have the capacity for a future expansion to 12 active stations that will serve up to 72 patients in total

? New reverse osmosis water treatment system for water purification and a technical workroom to support monitoring and maintenance of the water treatment system and the hemodialysis machines

? New medications room with a workstation for pharmacists, a nursing station with a direct line of sight to all treatment stations, and an in-floor scale, designed to be level with the floor to ensure both safety and ease of use for patients

? New ergonomic treatment chairs with customizable features for each patient such as power recline, side tables, retractable footrests and customizable lighting

Frank Walterhouse, a hemodialysis patient at Headwaters Hospital for 16 years, was at the unveiling of the new unit, representing patients who will be regularly using it.

?As you can imagine, I've seen a lot of changes and this is by far the best change I've seen. It's wonderful to be here in this new, bright beautiful permanent space,? said Walterhouse.

During the renovation process, the patients of the hemodialysis unit were included in many of the design choices. They helped select the chairs, which have heating and massage options, the paint colour, photographic window film, and the location of many items within the department.

?This means a lot to us because we spend so much of our time here,? said Walterhouse. ?This may seem like a small issue to a lot of people, but to us patients who spend three times a week, four hours at a time here, it's very nice to be included.?

According to Headwaters Hospital, there are currently 36 patients who are treated in the hemodialysis unit regularly.

The renovation to the hemodialysis unit is, in part, due to the growing need projected to occur in the community in the near future.

Headwaters said with the completion of the renovation, the unit is able to treat up to 54 patients with current staffing but has the capacity to treat up to 72 patients in the future.

The renovation to the hemodialysis unit cost $3.6 million and was completely funded by community donations through the Smart Headwaters campaign.

?This unit is another testament to the powerful impact that philanthropic support from our community has on the exceptional care provided here at Headwaters,? said K.C Carruthers, CEO of Headwaters Health Care Foundation. ?Most donations that come to the hospital foundation are from individuals and families in the community who have been touched by the care provided here, and they give for a couple of reasons. They give out of gratitude for the care they or their loved ones have received, and they give to ensure the health care team here has the vital equipment and space they need to continue providing excellent care close to home.?