

Pembroke Regional Hospital Welcomes New General Surgeon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PEMBROKE – The Pembroke Regional Hospital’s surgical team is excited to announce the addition of Dr. Erika Yoojung Lee, a general surgeon who began her full time practice in the department this past December.

“Our surgical program is continuing to grow in very positive directions,” said Dr. Colleen Haney, Chief of Surgery. “Dr. Lee brings a fresh perspective. Her collaborative approach is exactly what we need to keep our program responsive and adaptable to meet the needs of the population.”

Originally from South Korea, Dr. Lee’s family immigrated to Canada and settled in Toronto when she was nine.

From a young age, Dr. Lee enjoyed exploring and learning new things. She was always up for a challenge and loved to work with her hands. Initially, Dr. Lee’s career plan was to become a journalist so that she could travel the world.

In fact, travelling was what she was doing when she discovered that her real calling was a career in medicine and more specifically, surgery.

While working on her undergraduate degree in health sciences at Hamilton’s McMaster University, Dr. Lee took part in a volunteer trip to Cameroon in central Africa. During that trip she had the opportunity to work as an interpreter for a group of doctors and she happened to be paired up with a surgeon.

“I watched him do a hernia repair and saw the immediate gratification of making an individual better – of being able to use your hands to heal,” Dr. Lee said, adding that the trip to Cameroon secured her path and her passion for medicine.

After earning a spot in Medical School at McMaster, Dr. Lee said she explored numerous non-surgical specialties but ultimately, she discovered that she was happiest in the operating room. She continued her training at McMaster in the General Surgery Residency program.

“What I enjoy most about general surgery is the wide range of patient profiles. We manage young, healthy patients with simple appendicitis, perform complex cancer operations and help patients navigate through their path to wellness throughout all stages in life. It is a field where you are always learning and expanding your knowledge and expertise,” Dr. Lee said, adding that the multidisciplinary aspect of surgery is also very rewarding.

Dr. Lee has done further training in oncoplastic breast surgery and plans to expand her skillsets. She also hopes to bring to her practice a different approach for abdominal wall hernias, noting that the hospital is very supportive of this and other advancements which is great news for a new surgeon.

Dr. Lee's journey to Pembroke began last fall when a friend from residency recommended she do a locum or temporary position at PRH. It was quickly discovered that she was the right fit for the team and she was offered a full time position in December.

"Breast cancer is a particularly rapidly changing field and the addition of Dr. Lee helps support the excellent work we are doing in this area, particularly in oncoplastic approaches to breast surgery. She is skilled, compassionate and apparently a very good hip hop dancer! We are thrilled to have her join our team," Dr. Haney said.

Dr. Lee and her husband Allister Liu completed their move to Pembroke in February. Mr. Liu who is a pharmacist has taken on a position as Pharmacist Manager at Rexall Pharmacy in Pembroke. He was the recipient of the Hamilton Readers' Choice Award for best pharmacist in 2016 and 2017 and Dr. Lee said they both look forward to making this community their home.

When she's not working, Dr. Lee enjoys the arts as a way of relaxing. She plays both piano and violin and enjoys as Dr. Haney mentioned, hip hop dancing. She also hopes to be able to do more travelling and enjoy the Ottawa Valley.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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