

Community Connection



Pembroke Regional Hospital Spring 2023 Edition



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Pembroke Regional Hospital Values Partnerships And Improvement Opportunities



Sabine Mersmann

It's been said that where there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved. This could be said for any circumstance, but particularly in health care today we have seen great things achieved through work with our health care partners and I believe there is great value in not only maintaining the partnerships that we have, but also in forging new ones wherever possible.

Since my appointment to President and CEO of the Pembroke Regional Hospital in early November, part of the work I have been doing is re-connecting with some of our community partners in my new capacity and meeting with various community leaders to talk about health care. The focus of those conversations has been ways in which our hospital can serve our community better and how we might be able to



work with others to improve health care delivery while ensuring we are able to offer the services and programs that those in our region need most.

These conversations will form an important foundation for discussions this fall when we invite regional stakeholders to the table as part of the hospital's strategic plan renewal session.

And our stakeholders and community partners will also have an important role to play when our hospital is visited by a four-member survey team from Accreditation Canada the first week of April.

Accreditation Canada is an independent,

not-for-profit organization that sets standards for quality and safety in healthcare and accredits health organizations in Canada and around the world. Our last Accreditation survey took place in 2018.

Once again we welcome this rigorous evaluation process which will assess close to 2,000 standards and Required Organizational Practices, while validating that our policies and processes conform with best practice standards and that we are consistently following standard work processes. The survey will also provide us with an opportunity to learn from industry experts as part of our ongoing continuous improvement strategies.

During their time at PRH from April 3rd to 6th, the Accreditation Canada surveyors will visit all areas of our hospital while observing committee meetings, conducting interviews, leading focus groups and following both clinical and administrative processes through the hospital from beginning to end as part of "tracer" exercises. **Continued on Page 2**

PRH Recognized For Outstanding Support Of Organ And Tissue Donation In Ontario

In recognition of our team's work to champion organ and tissue donation, Ontario Health (Trillium Gift of Life Network) has awarded PRH the *Provincial Routine Notification Rate Award* for a 100 per cent rate throughout 2021-2022. This means that, as part of a standard process that occurs following the death of a patient, staff have consistently notified the TGLN team so that they can determine if there is potential for organ and/or tissue donation and approach families to get consent.

This is the fourth time our hospital has received this award, and we

were the only hospital in Ontario to receive it for 2021-2022.

"This past year alone, as part of our commitment to organ and tissue donation, PRH helped ensure that three patients were able to give the gift of tissue donation, enhancing the lives of many," said PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann.

Since joining TGLN a decade ago, our hospital has supported organ and tissue donation while providing optimal end-of-life care for all patients and their families.

To become a donor and register your consent, visit BeADonor.ca.



Pictured here with the TGLN award are some of our team members who support the organ and tissue donation process at PRH including, from left, Chief of Staff Dr. Tom Hurley, Clinical Educator Erin Van Allen, PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann, Infection Control Clinical Manager Kirsten Johnson, Vice-President Clinical and Support Services Beth Brownlee, Emergency Department Charge Nurse Jeris Johnston, Patient Information Manager Kim Haley, and Patient Flow Clinical Manager Annette Davidson.

PFAC Members Help Identify Ways To Improve Accessibility At PRH

Recently, three members of our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) participated in an accessibility walk-through of Towers C and D. The goal was to identify possible areas for improvement in our buildings, as seen through the perspective of people with disabilities. The identified improvements areas will help guide the Accessibility Planning Committee in their work for this year.

Some of the suggested improvements included:

- The need for more visible signage indicating the location of accessible parking spots for Tower D;
- Reducing the amount of signage at the Tower C entrance;
- Signage to indicate the location of Tower C's fully accessible washroom;
- Changing door handles to levers.

Additional walk-throughs of other areas are scheduled to take place in the coming months.

The role of The Patient and Family Advisory Council is to help ensure that patient and family voices are integrated in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services offered at PRH. To learn more about this group and how you can get involved, please call (613) 732-3675, extension 6161.

Pictured at right are: Tracy Gagne (PFAC), Marion Logan (PFAC), Plant Services Director Mike Godbout, Quality and Risk Management Manager Andrew Keck, Anna Walsh (PFAC), and Occupational Health and Safety Manager Sheldon Higginson.



CEO's First Update...Continued From Front

Preparation for Accreditation has been extensive, involving the work and participation of all members of our organization, from our Board of Directors to frontline staff, as well as community partners, patients and families.

We are proud of the work we do at PRH and look forward to being able to share all of that with the team during their visit.

So as you can see, there's a lot on the go and there are many more things we are excited to share with our community in 2023, some of which are included in this edition of our public newsletter while other news and updates regarding our construction projects, new professional staff and quality improvements in programs, service delivery and the patient experience are still to come.

I would like to thank our health care team and the community at large for welcoming me into my new position. Pembroke Regional Hospital belongs to all of us, and my team and I are committed to doing what it takes to ensure it meets everyone's health care needs and expectations.

Mental Health Services Clients Benefit From Time Spent In Equine Therapy



Alex Glofcheski (on horse)

It's not every day that someone walks away from their psychiatrist's office with a prescription for Equine Assisted Learning, but for eight clients of the Pembroke Regional Hospital's Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT), it's just what the doctor ordered!

For a total of 14 weeks in 2022, as part of a special pilot program, these individuals came together from all corners of Renfrew County to receive hands-on experiential learning through horse/human interaction and non-verbal communication.

"The goals were simple," explained Kristy Melcher, Concurrent Disorders Specialist with the ACT Team and lead for the pilot project. "We wanted to build a program that would address issues around isolation not only brought on by the recent challenges of the pandemic, but also common among those who experience severe and persistent mental illness."

She added that, by facing new challenges and building new skills through Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), it was hoped that participants would build friendships and strengthen their self esteem. To accomplish this, the ACT Team partnered with Greener Pastures Equine Programs which is hosted at Forbes Stables on B-Line Road in Pembroke and worked with Sydney Sheppard, PRH's own DBT Therapist, to tailor the program specifically to the unique needs of the ACT Team clients."



Jordan King

DBT therapy is a type of talk therapy (psychotherapy) that is specially adapted for people who experience emotions very intensely. Its aim is to introduce effective and practical skills which people can use when they are distressed. These skills are meant to replace other unhealthy and negative behaviours.

Those in the program participated in weekly 90 minutes sessions which began with a "check-in" process where staff and clients gathered around a fire pit to connect in a non-clinical setting. This often led to camaraderie, peer support interaction, and the best medicine of all – laughter, after which Ms. Sheppard shared the DBT skill of the day.

Participants were then partnered with one of the carefully selected horses and were invited to groom them in an effort to build a calm connection with the animal.

Each weekly session introduced a new and unique experience at the stable and including obstacle courses for the horses, therapeutic painting to illustrate a personal story using the horse as a canvas, the introduction of personal music anthems to ride to, and visits with the herd in their natural surroundings out in the pasture.



Donald Dombroskie

Participant feedback was positive with Jordan King thanking Greener Pastures for the experience and looking forward to having the opportunity to do it again, while Frank Lowerison said he enjoyed the trust he was able to build with his horses Keshee and Rocky!

Mental Health Services Director Mireille Delorme said that given the positive outcome of the pilot project, it is hoped that the project will receive funding to continue and expand.

"It would be a great thing if we can offer opportunities for the group to reconnect on a regular basis and explore other ways in which to incorporate this type of therapy into our clients' recovery journeys," Ms. Delorme said.

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Making Strides In Plan To Go Paperless

Over the next few years, the Pembroke Regional Hospital will be making strides in its plan to go "paperless" with implementation of a new electronic medical record system.

"PRH has identified Digital Transformation as a key strategic initiative which will include this next major step," said PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann. "While there is still a lot of advance planning work to be done including costing and identifying the source of funds for such a large investment, we are excited about the many benefits that this will bring for our patients and health care providers."

In recent years, the digitization of health care has resulted in numerous tools and resources that improve healthcare services, including software that makes health information more accessible to patients, and keeps patient data secure in one place.

At PRH, some of the work done to date includes transition from paper-based to digital physician reports which can be electronically transferred in a timely manner to family doctors. This enables a faster review of the results and any necessary follow up.

Pembroke Regional Hospital also submits inpatient reports, surgical reports, diagnostic imaging and emergency department patient documentation to a provincial electronic medical record called *Connecting Ontario* and *Ontario MD*.

The *Connecting Ontario Clinical Viewer* is a secure, web-based portal that provides care providers all over Ontario, with real-time 24/7 access to digital health records including; dispensed medications, laboratory results, hospital visits, Home and Community Care Services, mental health care information, diagnostic imaging reports and images.

This provides a comprehensive view of a patient's health journey regardless of where in the province the information was obtained and enables health care providers to make faster, more informed care decisions.

Our hospital has also been exploring other opportunities to ensure that patients can have access to their digital results in a timely manner. In the coming months, this will include the adoption of the *PocketHealth* platform.

PocketHealth is a secure, online

storage hub for medical imaging records such as Ultrasounds, X-Rays, CT scans and MRIs which, for a small fee, can be easily accessed from any personal device.

Once an individual signs up for *PocketHealth*, their images and reports appear in their account the moment they are ready. This enables patients to be better informed about their diagnosis and health status so that they are better prepared for conversations with their health care team. More details on the adoption of this platform will be shared later this spring.

Many patients have asked us about the availability of *MyChart*, particularly those who have had the opportunity to use this service at other hospitals. *MyChart* is another personalized, secure online tool that allows you to view your health information.

Although PRH does not currently have the ability to provide a service like *MyChart*, the work we are doing in lead up to implementation of a new electronic medical record system will help lay the groundwork for offering a service of this type in the future.



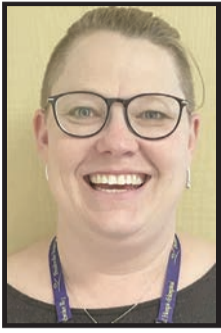
In the meantime, patients who would like a copy of their medical information can easily request this through our Release of Information Office. Most requests are filled free of charge and are ready for pickup in five business days or less (inpatients receive their requested information before they go home). Personal health information cannot be emailed as the system is not encrypted.

Most recently, as part of our organization-wide strategy to digitize processes, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has introduced a new electronic Lab order entry and information system which, together, have eliminated the use of paper for lab orders and results.

"As a hospital, we recognize the benefits of digital evolution and we are committed to the work it's going to take to move us forward. In the end, every investment we make will result in more timely access and better care for those in our region," Mrs. Mersmann said.

PRH Introduces Joint Replacement Day Surgery For Eligible Elective Patients

As part of an exciting advancement in the recovery of elective knee surgery patients at the Pembroke Regional Hospital, those meeting specific criteria are now able to recover at home rather than have a one to two-day hospital admission.

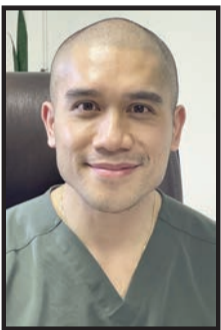


Heather MacMillan

Heather MacMillan, Clinical Manager of the hospital's Surgical Program said same-day surgery and discharge for this type of elective joint procedure is not only best practice and of great benefit to the patient, but can also help improve overall access to surgery.

Launched last August as part of a phased-in implementation, over 25 patients requiring partial and total knee replacements have had a successful outcome after being discharged to home the same day as their surgery.

In order to facilitate this at PRH, a working group was established that was comprised of team members from nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and anaesthesia. Dr. Chris de Jesus was the lead orthopaedic surgeon for this initiative. PRH also worked closely with the Surgical team from Queensway-Carleton Hospital (QCH) in order to better understand the process and how their surgeons determine eligibility as they were already offering this service.



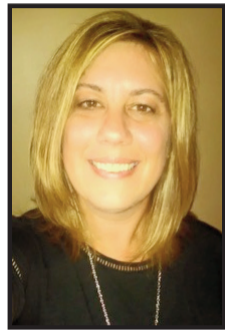
Dr. Chris de Jesus

"I was fortunate to have completed my fellowship at The Ottawa Hospital with Dr. Geoff Dervin who has been a pioneer in developing the Day Surgery program. With the aid of QCH, we have been able to adopt protocols and guidelines to ensure a smooth transition and successful implementation of our program," said Dr. de Jesus. As a result, he noted that "The Day Surgery Joint Replacement program has gone very well thanks to a collaborative effort from the nursing staff, physiotherapy and administration."

Literature has shown that this is a safe and effective method of recovery after joint replacement surgery. Dr. de Jesus added that, "New surgical techniques and multimodal

anaesthetic approaches have helped to address pain, minimize blood loss and improve mobility soon after surgery has been completed. Physiotherapy assesses patients hours after surgery to ensure they are physically ready for discharge and they are discharged home with the same pain medications they would receive during hospital admission."

As a result, patients are able to recover in their own environment, sleep in their own bed, rest in their own surroundings and choose their own food without the disturbances and disruptions which come with a hospital admission and can make it difficult to achieve good rest.



Michelle Godsell

"The new norm for hospital care is that we are always planning for discharge from the time of admission and making sure that patients go home safely with all the tools and resources they require," said Michelle Godsell, the Surgical program's Clinical Director, adding that recovering at home reduces the chance of acquiring a hospital-based infection.

She said that one of the keys to the program's success and keeping patients safe is education. "From a patient perspective, there is no surprise what the planned path is, and education continues after surgery with discussions and plans around pain management and post-surgical care."

Patients are discharged with all of the information they require including who to contact with questions and concerns. Staff then follow up with patients by phone and the patients also have regular follow up appointments with their surgeon.

Dr. de Jesus echoed those comments. "Communication has been a key element. When patients visit the Joint Assessment Clinic, they may be identified as a potential Day Surgery candidate. This message is continued and verified by the acting surgeon (Dr. de Jesus, Dr. Malcolm Chang or Dr. George Mathew) who chooses candidates according to established criteria."

That criteria includes the availability of home supports, an assessment of underlying health conditions, the ability to meet Surgical Day Care requirements for discharge and successful completion of a physiotherapy assessment.

Pembroke resident Keith Selle was one of the patients who met those criteria. On December 12th, 2022, he received a partial knee replacement as a patient of Dr. de Jesus and went home the same day. He had the unique experience of being able to compare recovery at home to recovery in hospital as he had previously had his right knee replaced at PRH.



Keith Selle

"Although I was well cared for in hospital, it is not the same as being released to your home," Mr. Selle said, noting that being in familiar surroundings lends credence to the old saying "there's no place like home", while promoting self-reliance and resolve to achieve a faster recovery.

He shared that he felt well-informed by the surgeon and the Surgical team throughout the entire process and felt that the quick release to home was beneficial in his recovery.

"We are so fortunate to have surgeons, operating room staff and physiotherapists who demonstrate the highest quality of professionalism in their fields. To them I say 'Thank you'," Mr. Selle said.



Sabine Mersmann

PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann said the Surgical team is now in the early phase of trialling Day Surgery for hip replacements, a procedure that typically requires a one to three-day admission. Discharge criteria will be similar with the addition of an occupational therapy assessment.

"With an increasing demand for hip and knee replacements, transitioning to Day Surgery for eligible candidates will help ensure that patients receive the operations they need in a timely and safe manner, while also freeing up beds for those who require a hospital stay," Mrs. Mersmann said.

"We are very pleased with the outcome of the trials to date and look forward to expanding the program."

A Spotlight On...The Geriatric Day Hospital

Did you know that, as more of our community's seniors are remaining at home throughout their later years, their family physicians are able to refer those with more complex health conditions to our regional Geriatric Day Hospital for specialized assessment and treatment.

Our experienced team works with patients and their families to help provide aspects of care such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, nursing, and geriatric medicine which is provided by a Care of the Elderly physician in Pembroke and a Geriatrician in Renfrew. All of these aspects of care may be needed to address common geriatric issues which require a broader scope of expertise than a family practice setting can usually provide.

Starting difficult conversations about future planning is another common reason for referral.

While maximizing each senior's safety and functional independence in their own home is the team's ultimate goal, sometimes recommendations are provided for alternative, more supportive living settings, especially when the current support is limited and the level of risk is assessed to be too high.

The Geriatric Day Hospital team also ensures that the relationship between patients and their family physicians are maintained, especially when



Team members from left to right, Occupational Therapist Angela Stiller, Physiotherapist Sarah Biggs, Registered Nurse Christine Rossi and Dr. Linde Corrigan.

Missing from photo: Social Worker AnnaMarie Ashick and Connie Young, Clerk.

referral requests involve formal cognitive assessments, diagnosis of cognitive disorders, and/or decision-making around cognitive fitness to drive.

Some of the other reasons patients are referred to the Geriatric Day Hospital include:

- Multi-complexity (multiple chronic conditions, advanced illness, complicated psychosocial needs)
- Mind (cognition, mood)
- Mobility (balance, strength, function, fall prevention)
- Medications (polypharmacy, de-prescribing, adverse medication effects)
- What Matters Most (patient's own meaningful goals and preferences)

Throughout their admission, patients and their families have the opportunity to develop positive and trusting relationships with the team.

At the time of his discharge from the Geriatric Day Hospital in 2021, one patient shared, "Until I came here, I didn't care whether I lived or died. I thought no one cared. But you guys did. And now I do care."

For more information about our Geriatric Day Hospital or if you are a family physician looking to obtain a referral form, please call the Renfrew County Geriatric Day Hospital at:

(613) 732-2811 Extension 7110.



www.PRHFoundation.com (613) 732-2811 extension 7408

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HELP KEEP CANCER CARE CLOSE TO HOME

The \$3.5 Million Cancer Care Campaign is now 85% complete thanks to the generous donations from our community! Help us to close out this essential campaign in 2023!

Our cancer treatment areas require updates and overall improvements including the space in our Pharmacy where much-needed medications are prepared, the Chemo treatment areas, and our waiting rooms.

These spaces are vital in the treatment and care of each and every cancer patient, and through this campaign, our goal is to ensure they are comfortable, easily accessible and state-of-the-art.

We need your help so that every single cancer patient has the most up-to-date equipment available to them at the Pembroke Regional Hospital, meaning one less worry for cancer patients and their families.



- **Help support local cancer patients.**
- **Help to expand the Chemotherapy treatment areas to care for even more local cancer patients.**
- **Help make a difference with a one time donation or every month by joining our monthly giving club.**

"In 2011, as Chair of the Pembroke Regional Hospital Board of Directors, I had the privilege of cutting the ribbon for our new satellite chemotherapy unit. Little did I know that six years later, I would be accessing this service for myself.

In February 2017, I was diagnosed with bilateral breast cancer. My treatment plan included three surgeries, 18 chemotherapy treatments and 25 radiation treatments. Thanks to the wonderful relationship between our medical staff and the staff of The Ottawa Hospital Cancer Team, I was able to have my surgeries and my chemotherapy all in Pembroke. It was wonderful being able to have my treatments right at home in familiar surroundings - provided by friends and familiar faces." *Barb Schoof*

YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT THE *Cancer Care Campaign*



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