

Community Connection



Pembroke Regional Hospital Holiday 2025 Edition



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Pembroke Regional Hospital Celebrates The Official Opening Of Their Expanded Chemotherapy and Medical Daycare Space

Since 2011, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has worked in partnership with the Regional Cancer Center at The Ottawa Hospital to operate a Level 4 Satellite Chemotherapy Clinic combined with Medical Daycare. The provision of these services has enabled patients to receive care close to home, surrounded by loved ones and supported by a team of highly trained, compassionate professionals at a very vulnerable point in their lives.

These same patients will now benefit from an extensive upgrade and expansion of the hospital's treatment space which has created a more modern, bright and welcoming healthcare environment.

On October 29th, approximately 60 guests including members of the hospital's leadership team, staff, physicians, donors, community partners, municipal representatives and patients came together for the official opening of the space.

Acknowledging how cancer touches many in our community, PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann said "Whether it's a friend, a loved one, a colleague, or ourselves - it's a journey that no one walks alone. And while we can't change the diagnosis, what we can do - and what we strive to do every single day - is enhance the experience of care. We can create spaces that feel safe, warm, and welcoming, and spaces that offer dignity, comfort, and connection."

In the last fiscal year alone, the hospital facilitated 1,200 visits for chemotherapy and another 1,200 for Medical Daycare procedures like blood transfusions, intravenous iron infusions and other IV medications.

Mrs. Mersmann added that the new open-concept treatment area allows for more interaction between patients, fostering a sense of community and support. Recognizing the role that families and caregivers play in a patient's healing journey, she also shared that the new space includes improved



From left, PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann, Michael Blackmore, PRH Foundation Board Chair Lisa Edmonds, General Surgeon Dr. Amanda Williamson and PRH Board Chair Dean Sauriol.

waiting areas and new education rooms for those who are there to support loved ones.

This latest construction work represents Phase Two of the hospital's Cancer Care Project. Phase One, which was unveiled in April 2023, involved upgrades to the hospital's inpatient Pharmacy space which doubled the team's capacity for preparing chemotherapy drugs. Together, these improvements are part of a larger vision - one that PRH shares with its regional cancer care partners - to bring more care closer to home.

In her remarks, Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation Board Chair Lisa Edmonds shared donor stories and reflected on the community's incredible generosity through their financial support of the project.

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\$50,000 Donation Caps Off PRH Auxiliary's Latest Fundraising Goal

Earlier this fall, the PRH Auxiliary completed their \$150,000 fundraising goal for the purchase of Bone Density Testing equipment for the hospital's Diagnostic Imaging department.

The final \$50,000 donation was comprised of \$25,000 in proceeds from Delta Bingo & Gaming Pembroke and \$25,000 raised through the Gift Shop, the Mural Cafe, HELPP lottery tickets sales, patient TV rentals and ATM fees.

Pictured from left, PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann, Auxiliary Treasurer Kathy Green, Auxiliary President Diana Gagne and Gift Shop Manager Brenda Long.

PRH President And CEO Shares End Of Year Update And Looks To 2026 With Optimism

As we head into the 2025 holiday season, I am pleased to highlight some of the recent news from our hospital as well as our vision of what lies ahead in 2026.

Investing in Our Infrastructure

Since my last update, our hospital has received just over \$2.4 million in one-time funding through the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund (HIRF) from the Ministry of Health for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. This funding - more than double what we received last year - is allowing us to complete essential upgrades, including roofing and flooring replacements, HVAC heating and cooling improvements, plumbing updates, and fire suppression system installations in unprotected areas of our facility. With four buildings of varying ages, these investments are critical to maintaining safe, reliable spaces for patients and staff.

Construction Update

I'm happy to share that our Tower C Main Entrance Project is nearing completion. With Mulvihill Drug Mart settled in to their new space, the latest phase involves the creation of new space for our Auxiliary's relocated Gift Shop. Despite a few setbacks, we anticipate a move-in date sometime in February and our Auxiliary volunteers can't wait!

HART Hub Progress

Over the past several months, the partners have been working collaboratively to bring some of the proposed services to address homelessness, mental health and addictions to life. This work includes:

- 24/7 operation of the Warming Centre at 156 John Street, offering 21 recliners, six overflow chairs, and connections to vital health and social services.
- Opening of Bridge Housing at 700 Mackay Street in October which provides transitional support on the path to stable housing.
- Go-live of the HART Hub Care Team digital platform, enabling agencies across the county to work together seamlessly.
- The introduction of a dedicated phone line - 1-844-720-0056 for referrals or general inquiries.

The team is now actively moving forward with planning for upcoming phases of development, including the introduction of supportive treatment beds.

Continued on Page 2



Sabine Mersmann

Get your flu shot and make it a healthy holiday season



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CEO Shares End Of Year Update And Vision For 2026...Continued From Front

Expanding Mental Health Care

PRH is actively pursuing Schedule One designation for our Acute Mental Health department. This important step will allow patients to receive specialized care closer to home, keeping them connected to family and support networks during treatment. Our formal application will be submitted before the end of this year, and we look forward to sharing updates as this process moves forward.

Empower Forward: Creating Pathways to Independence

One of the initiatives I am very proud of this year is Empower Forward, a job-readiness program designed for individuals affected by gender-based violence. This program offers hope, healing, and a path to independence through personalized support, employment placements, and trauma-informed care training for service providers.

This initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration among PRH Mental Health Services and community partners, including Bernadette McCann House, Robbie Dean Family Counselling Centre, The Phoenix Centre, Addictions Treatment Services and North Renfrew Family Services.

This initiative reflects what's possible when our community comes together to create safe, inclusive opportunities for healing and growth and has already:

- Provided employment support for 34 clients
- Secured job placements for 12 individuals
- Partnered with eight local employers to provide opportunities.
- Provided specialized training for 80 service providers to better support those affected by violence

Looking ahead...

In partnership with Marianhill, we have long provided care for patients requiring Complex Continuing Care (CCC) beds. These patients include those who no longer have significant acute care medical needs but are still medically complex and could require care for up to 90 days on average versus being discharged to home.

Beginning April 1, 2026, these beds will return to PRH and be co-located on Medical 2A. Planning is underway to ensure staffing and resources are in place to meet the needs of these medically complex patients.

Regional Collaboration for Preceptor Education

This December, members of our team will join hospital partners from across the Champlain Health Region for a collaborative initiative focused on strengthening mentorship in all hospital departments. Hosted by Bruyère Health and The Ottawa Hospital (TOH), this partnership brings together regional organizations to support preceptors, the dedicated professionals who guide students in clinical settings.

Through shared resources, joint training sessions, and consistent standards, we aim to ensure every learner has a positive, safe, and supportive experience, no matter where they train. This collaboration is about building confidence in our preceptors and fostering a culture of learning across the region.

Participating members from Pembroke Regional Hospital will bring these learnings back and share them in dedicated education sessions with identified PRH preceptors, using a “train-the-trainer” model to cascade knowledge and best practices throughout our organization.

Regional Collaboration for Rehabilitation Education

In rehabilitation, our teams are partnering with regional colleagues to identify opportunities for shared learning and skill development. Hosted by Queensway-Carleton Hospital (QCH), this initiative brings together acute care and rehabilitation partners from across the Champlain Health Region to strengthen collaboration and elevate standards of care.

The work includes creating joint workshops, developing rehab-specific resources, and aligning best practices across disciplines such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology. By working together, we can enhance the quality of care for patients and ensure clinicians have access to the latest tools and knowledge.

Expanding Pediatric Surgery with CHEO

Our partnership with CHEO will continue as we work collaboratively to look forward to bringing more pediatric surgical care closer to home. CHEO surgeons and members of their team continue to operate at PRH alongside our teams, reducing travel for families and building local expertise.

Together, we’re improving access, sharing best practices, and creating a sustainable model for regional pediatric care.

Medical Equipment Renewal

To ensure we have the best equipment possible, our hospital is in the process of purchasing a replacement CT scanner and Ultrasound machines for our Diagnostic Imaging department in 2026.

Go-Live For Epic, Fall 2026

The implementation of our new health information system, *Epic*, the platform with the *MyChart* patient portal, will be the most transformative change this hospital has ever seen.

Behind the scenes, work to ready all aspects of our organization has been taking place and will be ramping up in the months ahead.

Bringing this level of connectivity online, and aligning ourselves with the majority of hospital in eastern Ontario will be a game changer and while it won’t come without challenges, the end result will truly be “Epic”!

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and happy holiday season. Lots more to come in 2026!

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CHEO And PRH Collaborate For Kids



CHEO President and CEO Dr. Vera Etches recently visited with our Perioperative team to personally express her thanks for their hospitality and the great partnership that has been formed between their team and ours in order to bring pediatric surgery closer to home.

She expressed how important it is to families in our area to be able to receive the same level of care and compassion without the added drive to Ottawa and said that her team has appreciated how friendly and welcoming the environment has been since the partnership was initiated.

Pictured above, Registered Nurse (RN) Laurie Langille, Vice-President of People/Quality/Mental Health Services Brent McIntyre, RN Stacey West, CHEO Operating Room Manager Dan Lebreux, Dr. Vera Etches, Chief of Staff Dr. Declan Rowan, PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann, Clinical Manager of Periop Services/ICU Heather Macmillan, Clinical Care Lead Marc Rheaume, Vice-President of Clinical Services/Chief Nursing Executive Beth Brownlee and Quality Assurance and Equipment Supervisor (Medical Device Reprocessing - MDR) Amber Boire.

Pictured below, Stacey West, Anesthesiologist Dr. Naguib Farag, Marc Rheaume, MDR Tech Sean Dixon-Cole, CHEO RN First Assist Jessica McAdam, Beth Brownlee, CHEO General Surgeon Dr. Gilgamesh Eamer, Interim Chief of Surgery Dr. Amanda Williamson, Sabine Mersmann, Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) Kalynn Bludd, Heather Macmillan, RPN Katelyn Miller and Periop Services Clinical Director Laurie Menard.



Expanded Chemotherapy And Medical Daycare Space...Continued from Front



PRH Board Chair Dean Sauriol and PRH Foundation Board Chair Lisa Edmonds

(nursing) staff who exemplify professionalism, compassion, and a genuine commitment to your well-being. Their expertise and empathy make what can be a very difficult journey feel more manageable and less isolated,” said Mr. Blackmore.



more than 30 credentialed oncologists who work together with local physicians to provide personalized, high-quality care.

In addition to expressing his gratitude to each team member who provides

“When we launched the Cancer Care Campaign in 2021, we knew the goal was ambitious - \$3.5 million during a global pandemic. But our community stepped up and this campaign became more than fundraising; it became a movement of hope.”

Local resident Michael Blackmore, a Registered Nurse for the past 35 years and a health care executive in long term care, shared his experience as a chemotherapy patient at PRH and someone who has benefitted from having his care close to home. From the moment you arrive at reception, you're greeted with kindness and a welcome familiarity that grows with each appointment. Care is performed by

“Receiving care close to home reduces the stress and travel time associated with appointments, allowing me to focus more on my recovery and maintaining a sense of normalcy, while the convenience and accessibility of this program with seamless integration with Ottawa Hospital oncologists truly enhances the overall patient experience,” he said, referencing the network of

care, Mr. Blackmore praised all involved in the construction project for the “new facility which not only provides modern, comfortable treatment spaces, but also reflects the hospital's vision for continued growth and excellence in care.”



Rounding out the ceremony were remarks by General Surgeon, Dr. Amanda Williamson, who spoke about the local physicians who support the clinic with medical coverage and a blessing of the space, those who use it and those who provide care in it, by Father Mitchell Beachey.

Before inviting attendees to tour the space, Beth Brownlee, Vice-President of Clinical Services and the hospital's Chief Nursing Executive, remarked that the space is more than just walls and equipment, but rather a reflection of shared values.

“It was designed with intention, shaped by the voices of those who provide care and those who receive it, and built to support healing in every sense of the word.”

Currently, chemotherapy treatment at PRH is provided for those with solid tumours such as cancer of the lung, breast, skin, bladder, kidney, the gastrointestinal system and some blood-borne cancers.

As the hospital make plans for the future, the possibility of also treating gynecological cancers is being explored.

Improving The Patient Experience With Power Bank Rental Station

When emergencies happen, they often catch us off guard - and in those moments, even small things can feel overwhelming.

At Pembroke Regional Hospital, we understand that you may not always be prepared for a trip to the hospital and that longer than anticipated wait times can also be difficult, especially when you're trying to stay in touch with loved ones, access important information, or simply find a moment of comfort through your phone.

To help ease the stress of not having a charged device during a time like this, PRH has installed a mobile charging station in the Emergency Department waiting room.

This new amenity allows patients, visitors, and staff to rent a fully charged power bank, so they don't have to worry about their phone dying when they need it most.

“This initiative reflects our ongoing commitment to enhancing the patient and visitor experience,” said Sabine Mersmann, PRH President and CEO. “In today's healthcare environment, staying connected isn't just a convenience, it's a necessity. Whether it's contacting family, accessing health information, or simply finding a distraction through entertainment, a charged phone can make a real difference.”

The JOOS Power Bank Mobile Charger station is easy to use, offering portable rentals for all types of mobile devices by scanning a QR code, using the JOOS app or tapping a contactless terminal.

Information you need to know:

- Cost: \$4 + HST for the first hour, \$7 + HST for the full day.
- Ownership Option: After three days, the power bank is yours to keep for \$50, or you can purchase it outright at the time of rental.
- Security: A \$35 pre-authorization is placed and released upon return (processing times may vary by bank).
- Safety: Power banks are CSA and MFi certified, antimicrobial, and sanitized after each use.

“Connectivity is a vital part of the care experience,” Mrs. Mersmann said. “We're excited to offer this new amenity and grateful to JOOS for their partnership, which also includes a contribution from rental proceeds back to PRH.”



Pembroke Regional Hospital News Briefs

New Funding for Nurse-Led Critical Care Response Team

Our hospital recently received over half a million in new dollars from the Ministry of Health for the launch of a Nurse-Led Critical Care Response Team (CCRT). The CCRT will complement existing services by providing timely re-assessment and follow-up for patients who have recently transferred out of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). They will check in on patients during the first 48 hours of admission to make sure recovery is on track and to address any concerns and they will provide advanced care on our inpatient units to help prevent illnesses from becoming more serious and reduce the need for Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admissions. This extra layer of support is designed to support staff and patients and ensure they receive the right care at the right time.

Led by experienced critical care nurses and supported by our Intensivists and interdisciplinary teams, the model has proven successful in other Ontario hospitals and will be a valuable addition to our care at PRH.

Planning is now underway, with a goal to have the team operating 24/7 within the next nine months. This is an exciting step forward for patient care, and we look forward to working with our clinical teams to shape how the service will work best for our hospital.

PRH Receives The Using Blood Wisely Hospital Designation

Our hospital recently achieved the designation as a Using Blood Wisely Hospital.

The Using Blood Wisely Hospital designation symbolizes a commitment to red blood cell stewardship and to the continuous pursuit of quality improvement by reducing unnecessary red blood cell transfusions. In achieving this designation, we are now part of a select group of 160 hospitals that is making a difference for patients, donors and Canada's blood supply.

Advocating For Our Patients

On November 20th, our hospital's Mental Health Services Director, Sarah Selle, second from right in photo below, was proud to be part of a Renfrew County delegation that travelled to Queen's Park in Toronto.

Organized by Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MPP Billy Denault, Sarah was in the company of elected officials and senior staff from the County of Renfrew who were scheduled to meet with provincial leaders and discuss a number of high-priority topics that affect Renfrew County Residents.

Sarah met with Associate Attorney General Michael Tibollo, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health John Jordan and Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Vijay Thanigasalam. She found it to be a great opportunity to highlight the work that is being done in Renfrew County to support individuals with mental health and substance use concerns and also to identify gaps and advocate for further support.





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SCHEDULE

Pembroke Mall Pop-Up Shop	Sale of the Week	PRH Gift Shop
November 28 - 5-8 pm November 29 & 30 - 10 am-4 pm	20% Off	November 28 to December 5
December 6 & 7 - 10 am-4 pm	30% Off	December 6 to 12
December 13 & 14 - 10 am-4 pm	40% Off	December 13 to 19
December 20 & 21 - 10 am-4 pm	50% Off	December 20 to January 4

Sale on Regular Priced Merchandise
No Further Discounts Applied



Auxiliary's Pop-Up Gift Shop Returns To Pembroke Mall For The Holidays

The Pembroke Regional Hospital's Auxiliary volunteers are excited to share that their Pop-Up Gift Shop has returned to the Pembroke Mall for the 2025 holiday season effective November 28th across from Coles.

Long recognized as a hidden gem, the Auxiliary's Gift Shop is known for its distinctive, one-of-a-kind items, many of which you won't find anywhere else in town.

From cozy winter apparel and beautiful jewelry to festive home décor and thoughtful gifts, the shop offers something for everyone on your list.



"This event is a wonderful opportunity for us to connect with the community in a new way and showcase all that our store has to offer," said Gift Shop Manager Brenda Long.

"Our shop has been somewhat of a well-kept secret within the hospital, as well as a go-to retail stop for those who attend our community fashion shows. We're now thrilled to be able to bring its charm to the Pembroke Mall for the second Christmas season, just in time for the holidays."

The Auxiliary's Pop-Up Gift Shop is open Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each of the four weekends leading up to Christmas.

In addition, each week will feature a progressive sale offer on regular merchandise ranging from 20% to 50% off the weekend before Christmas.

These sales will be simultaneously offered in the Auxiliary's onsite Gift Shop at PRH.

For more than six decades, the volunteer driven Auxiliary has financially supported the Pembroke Regional Hospital's upgrades and equipment purchases that are not provincially funded while also providing amenities that enhance the patient experience and the workplace.

"Our Auxiliary volunteers pour their hearts into everything that they do, and this special event is no exception," said PRH Auxiliary President Diana Gagne, adding that all proceeds support the hospital and local health care.

The Auxiliary's Pop-Up Gift Shop is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. November 29th and 30th, December 6th and 7th, December 13th and 14th and December 20th and 21st.


We hope to see you there!



Diana Gagne

New Primary Care Pathway Facilitates Planned Admission To AMH Unit

To help improve access to inpatient mental health services, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has launched a new pathway that enables primary care providers to directly refer medically stable patients to the hospital's Acute Mental Health (AMH) unit for planned admissions. Renfrew County's Emergency Departments continue to serve as access points to AMH admission for all those requiring urgent support.



Sarah Selle


"This pathway puts patients first by ensuring they receive timely, compassionate care," said Sarah Selle, Clinical Director for Mental Health Services of Renfrew County. "By strengthening collaboration between primary care providers and our inpatient mental health team, we're creating a seamless transition that supports recovery and continuity of care. Together, we can intervene earlier and provide the right help at the right time."

The new pathway reflects broader trends in mental health care that prioritize early intervention, integrated care, and reducing reliance on emergency services. By creating a streamlined, collaborative process, PRH is helping to build a more responsive and compassionate mental health system.

Psychiatrist Dr. Valentine Okechukwu said the new pathway facilitates admission for certain patients, aged 18 and older, who are experiencing mental health challenges but are medically stable, as confirmed by recent blood work. "These individuals must meet a set of conditions in order to be able to bypass the Emergency Department. This way, patients who otherwise would have challenges accessing care when necessary, will be able to overcome this barrier. It also reduces the workload on the ED so that only those who must pass through the department do so."

The referral process is designed to be straightforward and collaborative. Family care providers are also encouraged to call the unit or consult with the psychiatrist if they have questions about eligibility or alternative care options.

"As family doctors or primary care nurse practitioners, we often see patients before their symptoms escalate. Having the ability to refer directly to the AMH unit means we can act proactively, offering our patients a safe and structured environment to stabilize and begin their recovery," said Dr. Richard Johnson, Chief of Family Practice at PRH.



Dr. Richard Johnson

Emphasizing the importance of collaboration, he added that, "This pathway strengthens the connection between community-based care and hospital services. It ensures that patients receive the right care at the right time, and it helps us tailor treatment plans more effectively."

Remote Care Monitoring Program Helps Renfrew County Seniors Heal At Home

In partnership with St. Joseph's Continuing Care (Cornwall), the Pembroke Regional Hospital has launched a new Remote Care Monitoring (RCM) program that is designed to support frail seniors as they transition from hospital to home.

Supported locally by the Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team (OHT) and regionally by Ontario Health East, this innovative 30-60 day program offers personalized virtual care and support for patients aged 55 and older who have recently been discharged from hospital or visited the Emergency Department and may be at risk of hospital readmission.

This could include those with new or adjusted medications, mild cognitive impairment, health anxiety, chronic conditions, those at high risk for falls, or post-rehabilitation patients requiring followup.

Free of charge for those who are referred by PRH Clinical Care Leads, Geriatric Emergency Medicine nurses or our Mobile Geriatric Day Hospital staff, the program is designed to complement, not replace, existing primary care, with the Remote Care Monitoring team working closely with family physicians and other community partners to ensure seamless care coordination.

"This initiative is a game-changer for our patients," said PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann. "It bridges the gap between hospital and home,

ensuring that our most vulnerable seniors receive the care and guidance they need during a critical time in their recovery. By helping our seniors remain healthy at home and connecting them to community supports, we're not only improving outcomes - we're enhancing lives."

As part of the program, patients receive a care package direct to their home which includes a tablet, blood pressure cuff, oxygen monitor, weight scale, and other tools to monitor their health, as well as telephone support for both patients and caregivers to ensure comfort and confidence in using the technology.

Then, after working together with a nurse to develop a care plan and goals, with daily symptom tracking, weekly nurse check-ins, medication management support, tailored health teaching and daily vitals monitoring, the program empowers patients to manage their conditions safely and confidently from the comfort of their own homes.

"Connecting patients to vital community services, easing the burden on caregivers, and ensuring a smooth hospital to home transition are all part of our commitment to compassionate, coordinated care," Mrs. Mersmann said, noting that, as the OVOHT continues to prioritize integrated, patient-centered care, this program represents a step forward in supporting seniors and their families.

PRH Welcomes Dr. Cameron Leafloor, Intensivist, Now Serving The ED And ICU

The Pembroke Regional Hospital is very pleased to welcome Dr. Cameron Leafloor to its Emergency Department (ED) and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) as a full-time Intensivist.

Originally from Ottawa, Dr. Leafloor completed his medical training, including a Residency in Emergency Medicine, at the University of Ottawa. He recently finished a two-year Fellowship in Critical Care Medicine at the University of Calgary, where he also served as Lead Fellow. His dual expertise in emergency and intensive care medicine makes him a valuable addition to our hospital and health care team, especially as we are looking to further grow and improve the services we provide in our ICU.

Dr. Leafloor's decision to pursue a career in medicine was forged at an early age as most of his family worked in the health care field. He said he enjoyed science and puzzles, and he had a passion for teaching, recalling how much he enjoyed working with people, helping them grow and educating students on ways to become healthier when he taught martial arts in his youth.

He then chose to specialize in emergency medicine and critical care because they are fast-paced, dynamic, require a great breadth of knowledge and provide opportunities to do a wide variety of procedures involving some of the most acutely ill patients in the hospital. Particularly as part of his work in the ICU, Dr. Leafloor added that he appreciates being able to connect with families while helping them navigate a difficult time in their lives as their loved ones experience critical illness. While acknowledging that both specialties are challenging and complex, he said that they are equally rewarding and you never know what each new day will bring.

Dr. Leafloor's journey to Pembroke was a result of good timing and opportunities. As his Fellowship out west was ending, he and his partner, a



Dr. Cameron Leafloor

psychotherapist with her own practice, were looking to settle down in a rural community with close proximity to Ottawa where their family and friends live. Outside of work, they both enjoy fishing, boating and outdoor activities with their dog.

After meeting with the hospital's Medical Affairs team, Dr. Leafloor said he found there to be a great collegial environment at PRH, some leadership opportunities with the Epic implementation project and a unique chance to be part of new growth in the ICU.

"In addition to liking the area, the position seemed to tick all the boxes for us in terms of being an early career doc and being able to do both ED and ICU medicine. Everyone I met was so kind and collegial and really lovely to work with and that has continued since I arrived. It was just the right fit at the right time," he said.

In addition to his clinical expertise, Dr. Leafloor has a strong interest in health informatics, patient safety, and medical education. He played a key role in the digital transformation of The Ottawa Hospital during its rollout of the Epic electronic medical record system in 2019 and he will be pursuing a Master's degree in Health Information Science from the University of Victoria by remote study starting in January. His expertise will be instrumental as Pembroke Regional Hospital prepares for its own implementation of Epic in the fall of 2026.

Chief of Staff Dr. Declan Rowan is thrilled that Dr. Leafloor has joined the growing critical care team, bringing with him a wealth of experience, energy and passion. "His clinical skills, leadership in digital health, and commitment to quality improvement are a tremendous asset to both our Emergency and ICU teams. He's already made a positive impact, and we're excited about what's ahead."

Proposed Service Amalgamation With The Phoenix Centre Awaits Ministry Approval

In a forward-thinking move to enhance mental health care across Renfrew County, the Phoenix Centre for Children and Families has formally invited the Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH) to consider an amalgamation of its services.

This proposed integration would see the Phoenix Centre's programs become part of Mental Health Services of Renfrew County, which currently serves individuals aged 16 and up.

"This amalgamation will allow us to maintain our high standards of care while ensuring our team is supported and valued. It's about delivering better care in a better way - especially for youth transitioning into adult services and for families navigating multiple systems of support," said Susan Kennedy, Executive Director of the Phoenix Centre.

The Phoenix Centre has long been a cornerstone of child and youth mental health services in Renfrew County, supporting individuals aged 17 and

under who are experiencing emotional and behavioural challenges.

The proposed amalgamation is designed to preserve and enhance these services while aligning them with the hospital's broader mental health programming.

"By bringing together the expertise and dedication of both organizations, we can ensure that families receive the support they need at every stage of life, while also better supporting our health care workers with competitive compensation and benefits," said PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann.

Importantly, all services will continue to be delivered in their current locations, with no changes to contact numbers, registration processes, or documentation systems. The new designation will be "The Phoenix Centre for Children and Families of Pembroke Regional Hospital."

If approved, the amalgamation will take place in the spring of 2026.

PRH Welcomes Project SEARCH Interns

The Renfrew County District School Board (RCDSB) has launched Project SEARCH, an internationally recognized employment training program designed to help youth with disabilities that may cause barriers to entering the workforce to secure competitive employment.

This program is being delivered in partnership with our hospital, the Petawawa Military Family Resource Centre (PMFRC), and Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley (CLUOV).

A total of five RCDSB students began the program in September, marking the first to benefit from this model, which has achieved a 70 percent employment success rate globally.

Based at PRH, Project SEARCH offers students in their final year of high school a 10-month workplace immersion.

Participants complete three on-site internships in a variety of departments. Each day begins with classroom instruction on employability skills, while also touching on life skills and navigating social spaces.

"Project SEARCH provides RCDSB students with meaningful, hands-on workplace experiences that bridge the gap between school and employment, empowering them to build stronger skills, confidence, and independence needed for successful transitions into paid employment," said Angela McGregor-Stewart, Principal, Specialized Services, RCDSB.

"We're proud to see students developing valuable job skills while contributing meaningfully to hospital operations," said Bailey Kehoe, Manager of Human Resources, Pembroke Regional Hospital.

The program serves youth with disabilities who are focusing on employment after high school. It brings together educators, employment service providers, and business mentors to ensure participants are job-ready upon graduation in June 2026.

"From the first day to now, the interns have grown a remarkable amount by learning new skills and completing tasks, all while gaining confidence," said Jenn Hawes, Skills Trainer, Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley.

"I am so happy that our community came together to offer this program, and I can't wait to see the progress the interns will make by June and how it will benefit them in the workplace after!"



Project SEARCH intern Erin works with the Maintenance department to keep the plants blooming.



Project SEARCH intern Ethan sanitizes equipment for future patient use on the inpatient Rehabilitation unit.

Kudos Corner

We are grateful to receive positive feedback from our patients and their families such as these two compliments we have received permission to share.

"I am forever grateful to Dr. Leslie Needham for saving my life. I entered the PRH Emerg on August 2nd suffering from discomfort in my chest. I thought it was bad indigestion. Never did I ever think I had a heart attack.

Her easy-going demeanor kept me so calm that I had no fear. She definitely picked the right profession to be in."

"On Friday, November 21th, 2025, my husband was admitted for a bowel obstruction. The staff in Emergency, as well as the staff on the Third Floor Surgical Unit were exceptional.

They collaborated together to provide the best of patient care. They are all patient-centered, compassionate, respectful, accountable and professional. Your staff go above and beyond. They are very valuable to you, as well to Renfrew County Residents. Also, if I may add, your volunteers have all the same attributes!

I thank-you from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful care my husband received.

p.s. Your renovations are beautiful, absolutely stunning!"



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foundation@prh.ca



Help Keep Healthcare Close to Home!

Building on Pembroke Regional Hospital's commitment to having quality care closer to home, we are focused on raising the necessary funds to advance and expand our ability to provide top quality patient care while ensuring that our teams have access to the very best equipment and advanced technology to serve our community. As the purchase of equipment is not fully funded by the government, we rely on the generous support of our community to ensure that we have state-of-the-art equipment available at PRH. In continuing the Foundation's mission of raising, managing and distributing funds to the hospital for it's highest priority equipment needs, here are some of the upcoming needs we are fundraising for:



High priority needs of our regional hospital:

- **Replacement CT Scanner** - Our hospital's existing CT Scanner (purchased in 2012) currently provides nearly 16,000 images per year and is approaching end-of-life (estimated date of 2026). An updated CT Scanner is required to ensure that patients have continued access to this critical diagnostic imaging service at Pembroke Regional Hospital.

- **Health Information System (EPIC)** - Best recognized as the system that has the **MyChart** patient portal, all information will be transferred from a paper-based system to a connected digital system that receives and organizes all inputs along a patient's journey and analyzes that data to provide staff and physicians with actionable information to treat patients. **MyChart** will enable patients to access their health information including appointments, lab and diagnostic imaging results, and discharge/medication instructions.

- **Other equipment needs**- Bone Density Test Unit, Thyroid Uptake System, Ultrasound Machines, Patient Beds, Maternal Fetal Monitor, GlideScope and more.

You can be part of this remarkable journey to advance local healthcare by making a donation using the donation form below or by becoming a **Monthly Donor**.

Thank you for your support of local healthcare!

YES, I will help my Pembroke Regional Hospital

- ☐ Here is a one-time gift to help my PRH when it needs me the most.
- ☐ I want to make a monthly gift to ensure the continued health and well being of Renfrew County families for the foreseeable future.
- ☐ I wish to make a pledge gift of \$_____ per year for 3 years to act as a transformation gift towards the greatest equipment needs at the Pembroke Regional Hospital.

Gift Amount: ☐ \$30 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other: _____

☐ Please use my credit card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS

DONATE ONLINE: www.prhfoundation.com/donate

Full Name	Card #	Expiry Date
Phone Number	Email (for electronic newsletters and tax receipt)	
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Charitable registration #: 870047610 RR0001 705 Mackay Street, Pembroke, ON K8A 1G8 (613) 732-2811 x 7408

More ways to help:

DONATE ONLINE:

prhfoundation.com/donate



Catch the Ace:

prhcatchtheace.ca

Charitable registration #: 870047610 RR0001
705 Mackay Street, Pembroke, ON K8A 1G8
(613) 732-2811 x 7408

By selecting "Recurring Monthly Donation," you can make a gift that keeps on giving and help us purchase our highest priority needs, as we need them! For additional information, please call (613) 732-2811 extension 7408 or email: foundation@prh.email. To make an online donation, visit www.PRHFoundation.com.