Looking for trouble

In February 2009, Katherine Sirsiris went for her first screening mammogram. A few days later, she received a phone call.

“Can you come in tomorrow?” asked the RCH Breast Imaging clerk. A screening abnormality had been found, and a diagnostic mammogram was needed... quickly.

Next came the ultrasound, then a biopsy. The results were positive: it was cancer.

It would take a total of seven months for Katherine to make the agonizing journey from discovery to post-treatment follow-up.

“I’m a pretty patient person,” says Katherine. “I realize I was lucky and they found it, but it’s a good chunk of your life that is put on hold while you make your way through the system.”

Every day, the waiting room of Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH)'s Breast Imaging unit is full of women like Katherine, who are waiting to find out if they have breast cancer.

Research shows that early detection and diagnosis combined with a multidisciplinary approach for treatment helps reduce breast cancer mortality rates. So why is it taking so long for women to get a diagnosis?

For patients referred to RCH for diagnostic mammography, wait times are certainly not caused by a lack of staff expertise or effort.

“I have this incredible team with this great knowledge but we can’t see the volume of women we need to,” says Shannon Adamus, who is Supervisor of the Breast Imaging/Bone Densitometry unit at RCH.

The Breast Imaging unit at RCH has been meeting the strict standards of the Canadian Association of Radiologists Mammography Accreditation Program since 2000. An interdisciplinary team works 10 hours a day, five days a week to service a daily patient roster that is always full.

But right now, RCH has only one analog machine to perform all of its breast imaging. Currently, if a patient is referred for a diagnostic mammogram at RCH following an abnormal screening mammogram or discovery of a lump in their breast tissue, they may have to wait up to eight weeks for an appointment.

During this time, patients and their families are exposed to a tremendous amount of undue anxiety and stress.

“By the time I see the patients, they are very anxious to have their problem resolved, and so we make every effort to make a diagnosis for a patient ASAP,” says Dr. Heather MacNaughton, Clinical Director for Medical Imaging at RCH.

The goal of the breast imaging team is to assess patients with suspected breast abnormalities within five days.

RCH Foundation is raising funds for RCH to purchase two digital breast imaging machines, which would significantly increase capacity for diagnostic mammography bookings, while reducing waiting times and allowing the system to meet patient demands within a five-day period.

“We look for trouble and hope we don’t find it,” says RCH Breast Imaging unit Supervisor, Shannon Adamus.

For more information or to make a donation to the Breast Health campaign, call 604.520.4438 or go online at rchfoundation.com

continued on page 3
September marked my first anniversary as Chair of the Royal Columbian Hospital Foundation Board of Directors. The experience has been fast paced, rewarding and productive despite a storm in the financial world. Non-profits of every stripe have suffered from the recent economic downturn. Royal Columbian Hospital fulfills a basic need in the community – health care for all. Its dedicated and committed team of health professionals and staff proudly delivers excellent patient care to one of the fast-est growing regions of British Columbia. Every day they look after the sickest of the sick from Burnaby to Boston Bar and beyond.

To bolster this effort the hospital needs to continually upgrade infrastructure, invest in modern equipment and build strong partner-ships in the community. That in turn requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders. The remainder of this year and the start of the next will likely continue to be a challenge – and, an opportunity – for RCH Foundation to strengthen relationships of support. We will count on you in the months ahead to ensure you can count on RCH in the years to come.

RCH Foundation has a proud history of individuals and organizations coming together in order to address the health needs of the region. As always we greatly appreciate the support we receive from donors.

Success relies on leadership that sets a standard of giving. RCH Foundation Board Chair, Belle Puri.

Recently, one of my dear friends had to say goodbye to her dad in the Intensive Care Unit at RCH. She told me how amazing she was that even though the medical staff deal with the most critical of cases every day, the staff took time to care not only for her dad, but also for her. She says she will never forget her dad’s nurse, who held her and cried with her during those last moments.

I know that receiving the exceptional, compassionate care and service that RCH is renowned for is what inspires so many patients and their families to give. They share a common desire to “pay it forward”, so that others may also receive the best in health care, whenever they need it. On behalf of all those who rely on RCH, I offer my sincere thanks to all those donors who have chosen to make a difference in the lives of others.

For more information or to make a donation to Miranda’s Pay It Forward Fund, call 604.520.4438 or go online to rchfoundation.com

Inspired by her physician, Dr. Shafique Pirani, Miranda Tymoshuk wants to be an orthopaedic surgeon (above right); Miranda and her friends “pay it forward” (above).
Donor’s gift saves woman’s life

Mira Davison* is a healthy, active mother in her early 40s who enjoys hiking. Never did she imagine she would almost die from a severe heart attack. But she’s alive today thanks to a gift made by donors David and Joanne McDonald to RCH Foundation for the purchase of an Impella heart pump (see “Leadership giving” below).

The pump temporarily replaces the pumping action of a diseased or non-functioning heart. “Essentially, it is a tiny heart,” says RCH’s Chief of Cardiac Surgery, Dr. Robert Hayden. Prior to 2008, RCH patients who suffered significant heart muscle damage and qualified for a heart transplant or mechanical heart were transferred to St. Paul’s Hospital. Such patients had to be affixed to a rudimentary portable battery-operated cardiopulmonary pump to keep their hearts pumping while en route by ambulance.

After hearing about the availability of the Impella pump, Dr. Hayden decided to introduce it at RCH. It provides cardiac patients with the interim heart support they need, and enables many such patients to remain at RCH, closer to friends and family, while their physicians determine whether they are a suitable candidate for a mechanical heart or transplant procedure at St. Paul’s. As a result, patients identified for a transplant or mechanical heart arrive at the transplant centre in a healthier state.

But the Impella pump has also proven capable of helping some patients’ hearts recover function so they no longer need heart transplants.

“It enables some patients to avoid a heart transplant as it provides support to the heart over a few days that it needs to make a recovery,” says Dr. Hayden. “Mira’s case is a splendid example of what can be ahead for patients who otherwise might have died.”  * Name changed.

Leadership giving

Fortunately for a young mother, the gift was used to fund an Impella pump (see “Donor’s gift saves woman’s life” above). Without it, she would not have survived.

“When funding equipment for RCH, we always think of how this new equipment will give the doctor the best chance to help the patient,” says David. “It is truly gratifying to know we’ve been able to make a difference.” The McDonalds have been dedicated donors to RCH Foundation for the past 22 years. Not only have they committed themselves to RCH’s causes, they have brought their family and friends on board as well. David, a past RCH’s causes, they have brought their family and friends to RCH Foundation for the past 22 years.

“David is a relentless supporter of RCH,” says RCH’s Chief of Cardiac Surgery, Dr. Robert Hayden. “At the opening of the new CSICU, he came up to me and said ‘This all looks very good Bob. Now…what else do you need?’ That’s just the kind of person he is.”

David says he feels that the community’s “number one priority” should be healthcare. “The fact is that if the community doesn’t come forward to support the hospital, then the equipment and the facilities you need may not be there, and when it comes to your turn to rely on the hospital, you want to ensure they’re there.”

Looking for trouble

Did you know that cardio vascular diseases like angina, congestive heart failure, and hypertension may be related to your sleep?

AND that treating sleep disorders may decrease your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Find out more at this FREE Sleep Health Event

Speakers: Dr. Richard Smyth, Dr. Wayne Halstrom, and more
Date: Nov. 21st, 2009
Time: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Location: 2963 Glen Drive, Coquitlam, BC
For more information and to RSVP: (604) 468-5854, cansleep@telus.net
www.cansleep.ca
A survivor’s story by Lyle Johnson

The stroke strategy

Before I went into surgery, I knew something was seriously wrong with my head. I decided I’d pay for an MRI myself and I scheduled it for Monday, but on Sunday evening I woke up to the sound of my wife shouting, “My head hurts! My head hurts!” I raced downstairs, found her sitting on the floor, and immediately called for an ambulance. In the back of the ambulance I was told I was having a ‘vertigo attack’ again and he gave me Gravol. A half-hour later I was back home, lying on the floor, downstairs. I couldn’t speak but I mumbled something to my son who was still up and he woke my wife again. She called 911.

The doctor on duty thought I was having a ‘vertigo attack’ again and he gave me Gravol. A half-hour later I was back home, lying on the floor, downstairs. I couldn’t speak but I mumbled something to my son who was still up and he woke my wife again. She called 911.

For Ho, the three new TIA clinics, as well as the grouping of stroke patients, are now located at RCH, Surrey Memorial Hospital and Abbotsford Regional Hospital. For Ho, the three new TIA clinics, as well as the grouping of stroke patients, are now located at RCH, Surrey Memorial Hospital and Abbotsford Regional Hospital.

By Myles Murchison

Don’t spend more than you planned when you go cross-border shopping.

We assist persons with disabilities to lead meaningful and healthy lives by partnering with the community to provide a comprehensive range of person-centred services for individuals and the families who care for them. We offer the following community inclusion and housing supports in your community:

- Supported Living Network
- Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention (EIBI) program consultation
- MARINE
- LIFE
- CONDO
- Senior’s Support
- Social Club
- Work Experience
- Youth Program
- Host Family Services
- Housing
- Semi-Independent/Transitional Homes
- Staffed Residences

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Dr. Ho’s Possible Dream


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- Host Family Services
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- Staffed Residences

For more information, contact us at info@mapcl.org or visit www.laurel.mapcl.org
Good planning means caring for generations

Q: Why have you chosen to leave a gift in your Will for Royal Columbian Hospital?
A: RCH exhibits the finest in health care …

There is no better medical centre to support,” says Dr. Akbar Lalani, RCH Cardiologist. “Through our experiences, both personal and professional, we have seen how donor funding makes a real impact on patients’ lives. So by leaving a gift in our Wills, we can help RCH continue to deliver the best in health care innovation into the future.” Adds Mrs. Shamin Lalani: “We’ve also chosen to leave a gift in our Wills without conditions, as this will enable RCH Foundation to match our gift to the future needs of the hospital.”

Including a bequest (or gift) in your Will to RCH Foundation enables you to support the hospital without affecting your current standard of living. You can use gifts of life insurance, RRSPs and RRIFs, securities (stocks, bonds and mutual funds) or real estate, and provide for a one-time donation or ongoing support through an endowment. Whatever you choose, your gift will be used to provide the best in health care to others for years to come.

Mrs. Shamin Lalani and Dr. Akbar Lalani are creating a legacy of care.

For more information on developing your own plan for giving, please contact Laurie Tetrakenko at 604.520.4179.

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Thank you to all of our corporate donors for their generous donations, received to date in 2009, which are helping us to raise $2.3 million to support exceptional care at RCH. For more information about their gifts, please visit rchfoundation.com.

And a special thanks to these generous supporters...
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- Lougheed Town Centre $2,029.70
- Other $_______ (please specify)

For more information about our corporate giving program, please call Eleanor Ryrie, Manager, Corporate Partnerships, at 604.777.8340.

Your Health Matters is published twice annually by RCH Foundation. If you have any questions or story ideas you would like to share with us, please contact our office at 604-520-4438 or email info@rchfoundation.com.

Photography by Jerald Walliser unless otherwise noted.
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