



It's Your Hospital

ross memorial hospital report to the community



Dialysis Update

The view of the Hospital from Kent Street changes every day as work progresses on the new Dialysis Unit. The main structure, which contains 300 cubic meters of concrete, roughly 33 truck-loads, is now almost complete.

Construction crews are presently working on the underground mechanical system and the masonry on the roof. Next, they'll measure the windows for the glass "curtain wall" that will make up the exterior shell of the structure. In the spring, an intricate mechanical network will be incorporated into the walls and floor in order to support the equipment required in the new unit.

Sections of the Hospital building adjacent to the new construction are off limits while the mechanical and electrical systems of the new building are

tied into the existing structure. The contractor is working closely with Hospital staff to minimize any negative impact on regular operations. Construction on the new unit is expected to be complete this summer; the first patients will be welcomed in the fall.

In the meantime, the temporary 6-station Dialysis Unit on the Medical Floor has expanded its operations by adding a third shift of patients in the evening. That means 36 dialysis patients are currently being treated at the Ross. Even with this increase, there are still local patients who must travel outside of the community for their care. When the new 15-station unit is fully operational, a total of 90 patients will be treated locally.

The RMH Foundation continues to receive donations from the community for this project. Its goal is \$2.2 million— that's the local share of the total cost of \$6.5 million. With a pledge of \$500,000, the RMH Auxiliary is the lead contributor to the Foundation's "On the Horizon" campaign.



Medical Emergency Team

A nurse on rounds is checking on her patients. One patient feels weak, so the nurse checks his vitals (temperature, pulse, blood pressure and breathing). The patient's heart rate is 40. The nurse knows that patients who suffer sudden health emergencies begin to show warning signs up to 24 hours before it happens. A low heart rate is one of those signs. So she pages the Medical Emergency Team (MET).

The MET is comprised of an ICU nurse and a respiratory therapist who, along with the patient's doctor, bring critical care expertise to the bedside. Within minutes, the MET is there to assist nurses who believe a patient's health is deteriorating.

After hearing the nurse's concerns, the MET helps her to assess the patient who may require a change in medication

or oxygen, or an IV. Some patients are admitted to the Intensive Care Unit for close monitoring.

The Ross Memorial Hospital MET began with a pilot project on the Medical Floor a year ago. It was so successful, the MET program was recently extended to the Surgical Floor. In that time, there has been a decrease in the number of serious medical emergencies on those units.

The response from the nurses is positive. They appreciate having immediate access to expert advice to identify patients in distress before their conditions worsen. The nurses are trained to recognize warning signs and are told not to hesitate to call the MET, because when a nurse's intuition tells her that something is wrong, she's almost always right.



Chronic Disease Prevention & Management Program

Almost 80% of Ontarians over the age of 45 have a chronic disease, such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis or chronic kidney disease. In fact, most of those people suffer from two or more chronic diseases, because many conditions start with the same risk factors. Left untreated, one chronic disease leads to another.

It's important for people with a chronic disease to understand all of the steps that can be taken to stay healthy. But accessing all of this information can be difficult for patients, especially if they don't have a local doctor. So the Ross Memorial Hospital established the Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Program to improve patients' access to five interrelated disciplines: Cardiac Rehabilitation, Diabetes Education, Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Heart Failure Education and Nutrition Counseling.

"It works this way," says Carol Smith-Romeril, VP Patient Care, "a person with diabetes may enter the diabetes education program to learn more about medications and diet. However, the inactivity and high cholesterol that contributed to the patient's diabetes may also be leading to heart troubles. So he's referred to the cardiac rehabilitation experts within the program, who teach him about exercise and heart monitoring, and more importantly, the lifestyle changes that will help him to prevent and halt the progression of his disease."

For people who have no local doctor, self-referrals are possible. Calling the clinic and planning an appointment to discuss one's chronic disease will link that patient with the services, and doctors, who will direct the patient on a healthy path.

A Treasured GEM



Marsha Coombs was hired as the first GEM nurse at the Ross Memorial in October, after the province provided special funding for the initiative through the Central East LHIN. Marsha's expertise allows her to assess elderly patients and treat them, not only for the problem that brought them to the ER, but taking into consideration all of the health challenges that come with age.

She acts as the senior patients' advocate, ensuring they receive the appropriate care, both in the Hospital, and after discharge. Marsha works with the Hospital's Community Care Access Centre nurse to ensure safe discharge for seniors out of the ER and back home with community supports and referrals. Many patients aren't aware of the social supports available to them; others think they don't need them. There are also those who don't apply for support, because they're intimidated by the paperwork required. The GEM nurse guides these patients through the necessary steps, helping to keep them safe and healthy at home.

One out of every four patients who visit the Emergency Department is over the age of 75. And unlike younger people, who typically come to the ER because of a single health issue, these seniors' conditions are complex. That's why the Hospital's new Geriatric Emergency Management (GEM) nurse is a valuable new addition.

Ross Memorial Hospital: By the Numbers

Number of visits to the Emergency Department per year:	43,200
Number of surgeries performed per year	8,394
Number of babies born at the Ross per year:	469
Number of lab tests done per year:	419,750
Number of x-rays per year:	38,315
Number of drug orders filled by pharmacy per year:	72,800
Number of employees:	826
Number of meals served per year:	273,750 (patients & customers)
Number of volunteers:	375
Number of volunteer hours per year:	36,000

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