$13.5 million expansion to Grand River Hospital’s Freeport Site in Kitchener is providing new specialized services for mental health patients closer to families and loved ones. Care providers, elected officials, donors, patients and families officially opened the 50-bed expansion on October 29th.

“Thanks to the hard work of staff at Grand River Hospital and our regional partners, funding from government and support from the community, patients will benefit from care in a beautiful new facility closer to their loved ones and friends,” said Bryce Walker, chair of the GRH Board.

The program will provide 50 beds and services for individuals living with mental illness. It allows patients who have previously travelled to London to remain closer to home for specialized care. It serves patients 19 years of age and older who may need stays of up to three months as they receive treatment for a mental illness. It includes a range of beds and services serving seniors, those with a severe and persistent mental illness, and patients transitioning back to the community.

The Government of Ontario provided $13.5 million in construction funding for the project. Community donors through the Grand River Hospital Foundation also supported the project, helping to equip the new unit. GRH has worked with Regional Mental Health Care in London to transfer patients to Freeport to continue their care.

“Our government is pleased to fund vital mental health projects such as this expansion, as well as the new adult, child and adolescent acute facilities at GRH’s K-W Site,” said John Milloy, MPP for Kitchener Centre. “We want to have a system of care to support patients in whatever setting they may need assistance. But most importantly, we need to end the stigma linked to mental illness so people can receive the support they need.”

“Our foundation has seen growing support from the community for mental health projects at both of Grand River’s sites,” said Theresa Fischer, chair of the Grand River Hospital Foundation’s board. “This growing awareness supports not only the hospital and its services, but also reflects a stronger understanding of the need to address mental illness.”

The expansion features photographs from community members with lived experience with mental health issues. Grand River Hospital and the GRH Foundation worked with the artistic group Spark of Brilliance to provide 23 amateur photographers the opportunity to take pictures that show the hopes, dreams and challenges of living with a mental illness. The pictures will be on display throughout the Freeport expansion and new mental health facilities at the KW Site.

Mark Karjalusto is Director of Communications at Grand River Hospital.

By Mark Karjalusto

Building the Future:
Physical plant needs across Canada’s Academic Healthcare Organizations

A survey by the Association of Canadian Academic Healthcare Organizations across Canada’s research hospitals, academic regional health authorities, and their research institutes, revealed that close to 400 physical plant infrastructure projects, totaling nearly 20.5 billion dollars, are or will be, shovel-ready between 2009 and 2012, to address physical plant needs into the future.

Each of these organizations has a publicly stated tripartite mandate which includes (1) patient care; (2) training the next generation of health-care professionals, and (3) generating and using research, innovation and commercialization. Figures from the Association also show that these 42 organizations also provide employment opportunity to nearly 355,000 Canadians, steward close to a quarter of all inpatient hospital beds, and meet the emergency and outpatient needs of millions of Canadians each year.

However, like their counterparts in the United Kingdom and in the United States, these organizations also have the challenge of ensuring that the physical plant needs associated with these mandates are met. With physical plant life spans of 30 to 40 years, many of these facilities may need to be updated or have new structures built. In approximately 70 per cent of the projects reported, the intentions were to retrofit or renovate old buildings. In the other 30 per cent of cases, entirely new buildings were planned. In addition, while nearly all of the projects reported had multiple purposes, they differed according to the primary driver. The most frequently cited issues included the following:

- Implementing green and/or more efficient technologies, maintenance and repairs
- Meeting research and/or health professional training needs
- Updating or renovating emergency departments, acute care, and intensive care units
- Meeting primary care, ambulatory care, day clinic, or community-based service needs
- Better enabling access, patient safety and patient flow through the system
- Meeting rehabilitation, healthy aging and long term care needs
- Expanding women and children’s health services
- Modernizing and expanding mental health services

In many of these cases, the projects are well on their way through the fundraising and approval process. Each province has different and specific approval and fundraising requirements that usually have to be met in order to reach a ‘shovel-ready’ stage. However, in some cases additional funding is needed to accelerate and optimize the investments. One of the ways to enable this acceleration is for the Federal Government to renew its own investment in Canada’s health-related physical plant infrastructure needs. “Much as health is a provincial responsibility, so is the renewal of our health infrastructure,” said Bryce Walker. “This year’s Federal Budget was a significant step forward in addressing this need.”

By Tina Saryeddine

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Professional Development for Nurses

Engaging Nurses in Positive Leadership - One Day Workshop
April 1, 2011    Stratford, ON
May 5, 2011    Toronto, ON
$140—Early Fee
$165—Regular Fee

Nurse Entrepreneurship - A Commitment to Excellence - One Day Workshop
March 31 2011    Stratford, ON
May 6, 2011    Toronto, ON
$140—Early Fee
$165—Regular Fee

OASIS LEADERSHIP RETREAT
YMCA Geneva Park
Orillia, ON
September 23-25, 2011
$580 Early Fee Double
$665 Early Fee Single
Learn—Reflect—Nurture You
in a quiet nature environment
For more information or to register: 1-800-574-2742
www.ipiceducation.ca
Bluewater Health Announces VP Operations

By Meaghan Lawrence-Kreeft

Lynda Robinson has accepted the position of Vice President, Operations at Bluewater Health effective January 4, 2011, and will report to President/CEO Sue Denomy.

Lynda comes to Bluewater Health from Four Counties Health Services in Sarnia, Ontario, where she most recently served as Site Director responsible for planning and guiding the delivery of patient, out-patient and community outreach services. Prior to her time at Four Counties, Lynda was in London, Ontario, at Robarts Clinical Trials and London Health Sciences Centre.

“According to President/CEO, Sue Denomy, Lynda brings to Bluewater Health an extensive nursing background and numerous qualifications, “Lynda has a proven track record in healthcare operations. She has broad experience in the planning and implementation of both out- and in-patient programs and the completion of corresponding business plans. In addition to being a noted leader in the development of strategic initiatives and programs, Lynda also has over ten years of leadership experience for critical care, trauma, and multi-organ transplant services. We are very much looking forward to her joining our team.”

In addition to a Masters of Science in Critical Care, Lynda has completed the J&J – Wharton Fellows Program in Management for Nurse Executives at the University of Pennsylvania, and received a Special Merit Award from the Middlesex Hospital Alliance in 2009. She brings a strong commitment to quality and patient safety engaging staff, physicians, patients and families in decisions and planning.

“I’m excited and very much looking forward to working with the patients, all of the staff and physicians at Bluewater Health and the Sarnia and Petrolia communities,” says Lynda. “Ensuring that the patient and family receive the quality care they deserve and need, has always been my passion and first priority.”

Growing up on the family farm in Middlesex County where my family still lives, and having worked in both large academic centers and small rural hospitals, I appreciate the unique healthcare needs and opportunities of the Sarnia and Petrolia communities. Bluewater Health’s Mission to create exemplary health-care experiences for patients and families every time is something I look forward to and will strive to work with the Bluewater Health team to achieve.”

Lynda’s appointment fills a role that was vacant for six months during which time an extensive recruiting search was conducted. The following program directors will report to Lynda: Medical Imaging, Rural Health, Nutrition & Food Services, Mental Health Services, and Medicine.

Meaghan Lawrence-Kreeft is Communications Coordinator at Bluewater Health.

New therapy may reduce risk of cancerous neural tumours returning

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‘addicted’ to the enzyme and are extremely sensitive to this therapy,” says Tabiori who is also Assistant Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Toronto. “This therapy is unique because it is specific to a subpopulation of cancer cells, the cancer stem cells, that are likely responsible for tumour recurrence.”

Telomerase inhibition in combination with current therapies could eventually serve as a new therapeutic approach for cancer and be both effective and safe for children with neural tumours.

The next step is for researchers to work on translating these findings into a new treatment for children with cancer. “The hope is that this specific therapy might prevent relapse, which we believe is the major cause of death.”

The study is supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, the National Cancer Institute of Canada, the James Fund and SickKids Foundation.

About SickKids Research & Learning Tower

SickKids Research & Learning Tower will bring together researchers from different scientific disciplines and a variety of clinical perspectives, to accelerate discoveries, new knowledge and their application to child health — a different concept from traditional research building designs. The Tower will physically connect SickKids science, discovery and learning activities to its clinical operations. Designed by award-winning architects Diamond + Schmitt Inc. and HDR Inc. with a goal to achieve LEED® Gold Certification for sustainable design, the Tower will create an architectural landmark as the eastern gateway to Toronto’s Discovery District. SickKids Research & Learning Tower is funded by a grant from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and community support for the ongoing fundraising campaign. For more information, please visit www.buildsickkids.com.

Caitlin McNamee-Lamb is a Communications Specialist at the The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

Building the Future: Physical plant needs across Canada’s Academic Healthcare Organizations

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Caitlin McNamee-Lamb is a Communications Specialist at the The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

A report summarizing the findings of this physical plant survey will be released by the Association in 2011. More information on ACAHO is available at www.acaho.org.

Tina Savydiede is Assistant Vice President Research & Policy Analysis, Association of Canadian Academic Healthcare Organizations (ACAHO).

www.hospitalnews.com