



Town of Richmond Hill wing unveiled at York Central Hospital

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York Central Hospital is often the focus of great passion and pride in Richmond Hill. Many of the town's residents were born within the building's walls and even more have visited a loved one receiving care or been a patient of York Central Hospital at one time themselves.

For more than 45 years, the health facility at 10 Trench St. has been a town landmark and a living organism within the town fabric. So it was a fitting tribute to this long relationship that last Thursday, York Central Hospital unveiled the new Town of Richmond Hill wing.

Within the five-storey wing, situated at the north end of the hospital, patients will find the new and expanded Emergency Department, Chronic Kidney Disease unit and the soon-to-open Medicine Inpatient Unit and a 22-bed Intensive Care Unit, which is three times the size of the previous ICU.

The new ICU is the crown jewel in the Town of Richmond Hill wing and the unit will begin accepting patients on April 7.

Mayor David Barrow and other town councillors were on hand for the dedication of the new wing and a ribbon-cutting with hospital representatives.

The wing is named for the town, following a \$10-million donation by the municipality to York Central Hospital in 2003. That money was paid over four years, going towards the hospital's expansion. The amount was - at the time - the largest single donation from a municipality to an acute care hospital in Canada.

"This wing is awesome," said Mayor Barrow during a tour.

"To see what we started with a donation more than five years ago come to fruition is really remarkable and the facilities on hand will make such a difference to the residents of Richmond Hill and beyond," he added.

Hospital Chief of Staff, Dr. Larry Grossman, was literally beaming with excitement as he spoke to a standing-room-only audience in the wing's new Berwick Family Auditorium.

"Have you ever done a renovation on your house and once things were finished you wonder how you ever managed before?" Dr. Grossman quizzed those in attendance.

"Today we have increased our capacity and our level of care. We can take patients out of closets, pantries, out of outdated, overcrowded areas and holding units and into fantastic new facilities," he added.

Staff lead town dignitaries and residents on tours of the new intensive care unit - nicknamed 'the yellow brick road' by some of the staff - in reference to the deep gold flooring and the large bay windows which bathe the unit in natural light.

Beds surround the central nursing station and patients are cared for in spacious rooms, separated from their neighbour and the general unit by sliding glass doors, which offer privacy to patients while still allowing staff to visually monitor the patient.

"As opposed to the old ICU, patients will no longer be able to adjust each other's intravenous and nurses won't be able to take the temperature of two patients at the same time anymore," Dr. Grossman commented with irony, in reference to the all-to-close quarters of the former intensive care unit, where space between patients was divided by thin curtains hung from the ceiling.

State-of-the-art equipment and a spacious visitors' lounge round out the new ICU.

"We are putting a new face on York Central Hospital. Planning for this expansion started in 1995 and what we have today is truly an amazing accomplishment," Dr. Grossman added.

The unveiling was very festive, with patrons gathered outside the auditorium for cake, refreshments and a chance to discuss the new surroundings.

Bruce Harber, York Central Hospital president and CEO, acted as master of ceremonies for the afternoon of presentations and he expressed satisfaction with the new developments and York Central's future.

"This new wing goes a long way in achieving the vision we have to become the finest community hospital in Canada.

"It is a tall order, but with all the new facilities available in the Town of Richmond Hill wing I am confident our patients' satisfaction score will only continue to improve," Mr. Harber said.