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Media Release

York Central Hospital Welcomes Addition of New Breast Health Imaging Centre

Richmond Hill, ON: According to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, breast cancer is the most common cancer among Canadian women. One in nine Canadian women is expected to develop breast cancer during her lifetime. In 2008, an estimated 22,400 women and 170 men in Canada will be diagnosed with breast cancer. 5,300 women and 50 men will die from it.

October is Canadian Breast Cancer Awareness Month. To mark the month, York Central Hospital staff, physicians and volunteers today got a sneak preview of the hospital's new Breast Health Imaging area, within the Medical Imaging Department, to be completed in January of 2009.

Upon full completion, in January, 2009 the new area will feature:

- Three new digital mammography units
- Breast biopsy capability
- Breast ultrasound capability

“York Central Hospital is proud to be an accredited Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) Site that provides regular screening and early detection of breast cancer among the women and men in our community,” says Clare Johnson, Operations Director of the Hospital's Medical Imaging Department. “The sooner people are diagnosed, the sooner they can receive treatment and get on with their lives. Affiliation with OBSP makes the referral process easy and convenient for our patients.”

The OBSP makes screening easily accessible. Women may be referred by a physician or may self refer. They can book their own appointments and are reminded by letter when they are due for their next appointment for a screening. At the OBSP, women with abnormal screens are followed through to diagnosis.

Operated by Cancer Care Ontario, with sites across the province, OBSP is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Women are eligible for the OBSP if they are residents of Ontario, aged 50 and over, have no history of breast cancer or breast implants, have not had a mammogram within the last year and are free of acute breast symptoms. York Central's Diagnostic Imaging provides OBSP services as well as full screening and diagnostic services to all women.

To date, the OBSP has screened over half a million women in Ontario.

“We’re thrilled to be adding a breast health specific area to the hospital’s Medical Imaging Department,” says Wendy McInnis a Technical Specialist for Mammography. “With the addition of this dedicated space the people who need these specialized diagnostic services will continue to receive expert and compassionate care, recognizing that for many, screening of this type can be uncomfortable. With the addition of this new centre we hope to help both women and men feel more comfortable making their screening and testing experience as pleasant as possible.”

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Contact:

Stefanie Kreibe
External Relations, York Central Hospital
skreibe@yorkcentral.on.ca
905-883-1212 ext. 7484

Scheduled for completion in spring of 2009, Phase One of the major expansion and renovation project will:

- Triple the size of the Emergency and Medical Imaging Departments (partially open)
- Double the size of the Critical Care Unit
- Create a state-of-the-art Birthing Centre (already open)
- Provide Schedule One Mental Health Facilities including 6 new secured beds
- Add new Medical Staff Facilities and a 2,800 sq. ft. Auditorium
- Expand Fracture, Plastics and Ophthalmology Clinics
- Add capacity for 122 new Inpatient Beds
- Estimated cost of \$93.2 million
- Size 148,230 sq. ft.

Backgrounder

What is Breast Cancer?

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, cancer is a disease that starts in our cells. Our bodies are made up of millions of cells, grouped together to form tissues and organs such as muscles and bones, the lungs and the liver. Genes inside each cell order it to grow, work, reproduce and die. Normally, our cells obey these orders and we remain healthy. But sometimes the stream of communication malfunctions, causing the cells to form lumps or tumours, or spread through the bloodstream and lymphatic system to other parts of the body. If the first site of a cancerous growth or tumour is in the breast, the condition is called breast cancer.

Breast tissue covers a larger area than just the breast, extending up to the collarbone and from the armpit to the breastbone. Breast cancer can also spread beyond the breast if cells break off from the growth or tumour and travel through the blood stream or lymphatic system to other parts of the body. This process is called metastasis or secondary cancer, but the condition is still identified as breast cancer.

The Canadian Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for women:

- If you are 50, have a mammogram every 2 years.
- If you are 40 plus, have a clinical breast examination by a trained health professional at least every 2 years.
- If you are over 70, talk to your doctor about a screening program for you.
- Women of all ages. Get to know your breasts. Talk to your doctor about any changes.

What can you do to reduce your risk of breast cancer?

The Canadian Cancer Society suggests some risk reduction strategies may lessen the chance of developing breast cancer including:

Eat a healthy diet

Eat a diet high in vegetables and fruit. Although more research is needed into the effect of diet on breast cancer, a diet high in vegetables and fruit and low in fat is encouraged as it has been shown to protect against several cancers, as well as heart disease.

Be physically active

Research has shown that regular physical activity can help protect against breast cancer. Physical activity can be a collection of normal daily activities—climb stairs instead of taking the elevator, walk instead of drive, play with children instead of watching television. *Canada's Physical Activity Guide* recommends that adults add physical activity into their daily life by including

60 minutes of light to moderate physical activity every day. As you progress to more vigorous activities, you can reduce the time you spend to 30 minutes, 4 times a week

Physical activity, in combination with a healthy diet, is also one of the best ways to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Maintaining a healthy weight helps to reduce your risk of cancer. Research shows that overall 30 to 35% of all cancers can be prevented by eating well, being active and maintaining a healthy body weight.

Limit Alcohol

It is suggested that drinking less alcohol may lessen the risk of breast cancer, although research has not yet determined how much a safe amount would be. For women, if you choose to drink alcohol, drink less than 1 drink a day. (Pregnant women should avoid alcohol). A drink is one 12 oz (350mL) bottle of beer (5% alcohol), one 5 oz (145mL) glass of wine (12% alcohol), one 1.5 oz (45mL) spirits (40% alcohol).

Avoid tobacco

Don't start smoking or if you currently smoke, get help to quit. There is not any strong evidence to indicate that smoking is a risk factor for breast cancer and more research is needed to clarify the link. Although we know 30% of cancers are directly attributable to smoking.