

Dear friends,

Today I'm asking for your support of RVH's Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Program.

When someone receives a cancer diagnosis, their life changes in the blink of an eye.

But thanks to advancements in treatment there is more hope than ever before.

You see, cancer care has come a long way in the last few decades. And as the Surgical Oncology Lead for our region and Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH), I get to witness the impact of these advancements.



I've worked at the RVH cancer centre since it opened in 2012. And every day since it's been a great honour to be part of its growth and development.

It's a true privilege to work alongside RVH supporters to help save lives. Thank you so much for your amazing generosity supporting patient care!

Today, I'm hoping you'll continue your commitment to extraordinary care by making a special year-end gift to RVH's Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Program.

Your donation will ensure quality care, closer to home. You'll also help provide vital equipment that will change the lives of patients here at RVH.

And now, when you give before December 15th, your contribution will be **matched** by kind donors in our community including long time RVH supporters Sheila and Bob Burk. That means your impact can be **doubled** for a limited time!

Your generosity will give RVH the resources and technology necessary to continue advancing cancer care in our community. One example of how your support will help is through the purchase of new technology including upgraded mammography equipment, which will allow RVH to screen more patients and use today's leading-edge technology to identify the size and location of breast tumours.

Your support of cancer care is crucial because this year alone nearly 27,000 women in Canada were diagnosed with breast cancer. It's a sobering statistic, but breast cancer accounts for nearly 25 per cent of all cancer cases in our country and is the leading cancer diagnosis for women.

In fact, one in eight Canadian women are expected to develop breast cancer during their lifetime.

Early detection is key to treating this disease. The sooner breast cancer is detected, the more options we have for treatment. And starting treatment before the cancer can spread to other areas of the body is how we improve survival rates.

Mammograms are essential in early detection. You see, the early stages of breast cancer—when tumours are smallest and most easily treated—produce almost no symptoms. Someone could have this disease and be unaware, which is why screening is so very important.

At RVH we perform about 85 mammograms each day. And, understandably, equipment needs to be replaced over time and technological advancements are always evolving.

As our breast imaging equipment ages, it requires more maintenance and down time. That maintenance means we see fewer people in a day yet meanwhile, the demand for services is growing.

Not only do mammograms help with the detection of this disease, they are essential to helping plan for surgeries. To put it simply, I can't do my job if I don't have a mammogram for my patients. In fact, each of my patients may require multiple mammograms over the course of their treatment, as well as surveillance.

Mammograms provide information about the stage of breast cancer and allows us to see the size and location of tumours. This information is critical for surgical planning.

RVH has provided care for more than 27,000 people with breast cancer since our program opened and, as our population ages, that number will continue to rise.

We need your help to continue building on the tools we have in RVH's Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Program, including our essential mammography equipment.

It might surprise you to learn that for every 1,000 mammograms, five to seven women are diagnosed with breast cancer through the Ontario Breast Screening Program at RVH.

However, thanks to mammograms, most of these cases are identified early and are treatable. Since the inception of mammograms, mortality rates of breast cancer have decreased significantly. **It's a difference that saves lives.**

I speak with many patients each week about their cancer and treatment plans. Now, with COVID-19, these visits look different.

When we do see patients to discuss their treatment plan in person, they can't actually really *see* us these days. The gowns, the goggles, the masks, personal protective equipment changes the visual interaction, but I pride myself on ensuring it doesn't change the relationship.

Every day I'm so proud to work at RVH—but even more so over the last few months.

In the face of COVID-19, we've adapted to significant challenges. Yet still, in the face of adversity, patient care remains at the heart of everything we do and I've been so encouraged by the collaboration and commitment of everyone on TEAM RVH.

I chose to work at RVH because I value the warm and compassionate culture here, and I bring that into every single patient appointment—whether or not they can see me smiling behind my surgical mask!

It's a strange experience for my patients not to be able to see my full expression of reassurance as we plan for one of the most important days of their life: the day they will hopefully recover from cancer.

You have a role to play in making that day possible, too.

RVH's cancer centre is a much-needed hub for North Simcoe Muskoka. Since opening in 2012, we've brought cancer care closer to home for our neighbours and community.

This would not have been possible without donor support. Now, we are counting on you to help us continue advancing patient care.

Nobody should have to navigate this disease—but when they do, we want them to be able to do so closer to home. Closer to people who love and care about them, closer to a home they are comfortable in.

That's what you can give patients by continuing your support of RVH—extraordinary care, closer to home. I hope I can count on you to make a special gift to patient care at RVH today.

More than 11,000 patients, including breast cancer patients, turn to RVH's Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Program for care each year. Your support is the reason we're able to provide each patient with compassionate, expert care—the kind that any of us would want for our loved ones.

Please donate now. Your gift will help us to deliver extraordinary care. Together, we can do so much more for our community. Together, we can save lives!

Sincerely,



Dr. Renee Hanrahan
Surgical Oncology Lead
Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre



P.S. This year, in honour of my birthday on December 15th, I am asking my friends, my family and my RVH family—including you—to support cancer care. When you give before this date your gift will be **matched** by fellow donors, including Sheila and Bob Burk. That's double the impact for cancer care in North Simcoe Muskoka.