

Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan Announces Completion of CT Simulator Community Campaign

Regina, SK. – Just over two years after launching a \$3M community campaign to raise funds for two new 4D CT simulators for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan is announcing the project's completion. One of the 4D CT simulators has been installed at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and the other at the Saskatoon Cancer Centre. The Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan opened just three years ago, making the success of the campaign, launched a few short months after the opening of the Foundation, even more impressive.

"We are incredibly proud of how quickly we have been able to deliver on this campaign. It's because of the generosity of our donors, that we now have a new 4D CT Simulator at each of the Allan Blair and Saskatoon Cancer Centres," said Nora Yeates, CEO, Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan.

The CT simulator plays a critical role for every patient requiring radiation therapy as part of their cancer treatment. It provides a patient's medical team with the images they need to determine the best radiation treatment plan. Nearly half of all cancer patients undergo radiation at some point in their treatment.

"The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency strives to provide world-class care to each patient who comes to us for treatment. This level of care often depends on our ability to keep pace with technology. We are grateful for the tremendous efforts of the Cancer Foundation and donors for bringing leading-edge technology like 4D CT simulation into our cancer centres," said Dr. Jon Tonita, President and CEO of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

The fundraising campaign to support the replacement of the CT simulators at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and the Saskatoon Cancer Centre, was initiated in September 2019. Due to urgent need, the CT simulator at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre was purchased and installed in 2019, and the Foundation raised the required funds retroactively. The CT simulator at the Saskatoon Cancer Centre was installed and operational by the end of 2021.

John Hopkins, former CEO with the Regina Chamber of Commerce, passed away in February from cancer after a courageous struggle with the disease. Through his efforts in the community and his charity performances with the Garage Band, John was involved in raising just over \$1M for the Foundation's 4D- CT Simulator campaign. It was a surreal and emotional moment for him when he was able to access the services of the simulator his fundraising supported before he passed away.

In a written legacy interview left for his family after his passing, John speaks of his pride in the fundraising with which he was involved.

"I play in a band. We don't play for money at all, we just don't, but we will play for community things and try to raise money for the community. We raised over \$1M for the Allan Blair Cancer Centre CT Simulator. Anyone who is going for cancer radiation treatment has to go through that particular simulator, and the fact that we ended up helping to buy this – I am pretty proud of that. Pretty proud of what we did," he said.

John's daughter Jade says the work being done by the Foundation in supporting the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to provide equipment for the care of Saskatchewan cancer patients, is critical to the care delivered.

"It matters because you are giving that family hope and access to treatment that can buy people time – and that's everything to the families that are going through that," said Jade.

The Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan is thanking the numerous donors ranging from individuals to groups to corporate donors, who played a critical role in raising the \$3M required for the installation of the simulators in the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and the Saskatoon Cancer Centre.

“There are many stories of individuals, groups, and corporations that have donated to this campaign to update equipment in support of cancer care for Saskatchewan residents. Our donors help to ensure that Saskatchewan has the equipment it needs to deliver high quality cancer care to patients in the province”, said Yeates.

One of the most significant donors to the CT Simulator Community Campaign was Conexus Credit Union, which donated \$500,000, the largest corporate gift in the campaign.

“The 4D CT simulator is a critical piece of equipment that contributes to more accurate radiation treatment for cancer patients. We are proud to support this fundraising campaign and are so happy to see the machine up and running,” said Nicole Westerlund, VP of Member and Community Engagement at Conexus Credit Union. “Investing in basic human needs, such as critical health care services, is foundational to our purpose of improving the well-being of our members and communities. Thank you to the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan for all the meaningful work you do, and for lives of cancer patients across the province.”

Yeates says every donation has made a difference, and most donations come with a story.

Chris and Tina Lees from Arcola were both diagnosed with cancer in 2019 and 2020, and they have both undergone chemotherapy treatments at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre, as well as surgeries and radiation over the past two years. The president of Canadian Western Agribition and his wife have faced and overcome incredible adversity since being diagnosed, but they remain positive. The fact that they could access care in Regina, while continuing to run their farm, was critical to ability to cope. The couple facilitated a charity Hereford sale fundraiser at the 2021 Canadian Western Agribition. The event raised over \$70,000 dollars for the Cancer Foundation and Stars Air Ambulance. The funds they raised for the Cancer Foundation are supporting high-dose rate brachytherapy at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre. They felt compelled to give back to the Cancer Clinic.

“We knew we wanted to give something back. There was never a time when we went into the Allan Blair when those nurses didn’t smile and say “Hi, how are you”, and that made all the difference. We knew we wanted the funds to stay in Saskatchewan, which is why the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan is so important,” said Tina.

As a unique fundraising partner of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan is solely dedicated to raising funds for cancer care delivered by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. Every dollar raised by the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan stays in Saskatchewan to support the work of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

All donations to the Foundation go to enhancing cancer patient care and treatment for every resident undergoing treatment in Saskatchewan.

The Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan helps to raise funds to support the Cancer Agency’s operation of:

- Allan Blair Cancer Centre (Regina),
- Saskatoon Cancer Centre,
- patient Lodges,
- Community Oncology Program, in cooperation with health care partners, providing chemotherapy in 16 rural locations,
- screening and prevention programs for breast, cervical and colorectal,
- research,
- and more.

In addition, the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan facilitates events hosted in support of the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan. To apply to host an event in support of the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan visit cancerfoundationsask.ca

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