

2023

Community  
publication

# Heartbeat

OF THE HAT



MEDICINE  
HAT  HEALTH  
FOUNDATION

# Introduction

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*The practice of medicine is an art, not a trade;  
a calling, not a business; a calling in which your  
heart will be exercised equally with your head.*

– Sir William Osler

Welcome to the Medicine Hat Health Foundation's - Heartbeat of the Hat. Thank you for reading! We're thrilled to be entering a new year with you, as it will undoubtedly present many new opportunities to continue on our mission of innovating and enhancing local healthcare.

If you aren't familiar with our work, we are the charitable organization that raises and allocates donations, funds, and gifts on behalf of the region's local health facilities. Even if you don't know us, you have probably seen our campaigns around town, raising money to improve treatment for mental health, prenatal care, and more. Our most recent Christmas campaign, **It's Our Time to Give**, inspired acts of kindness around the region and helped bring holiday cheer to the hospital. Enhancing local care is a never-ending job, and that's precisely why it's so important.

The Heartbeat of the Hat is something new for us – an annual compilation of highlights, collective impact, and announcements that we would like to share. Despite all the challenges around us, we believe that there are so many exciting and amazing things happening, everywhere we look. This is thanks to people just like you. It's important

to us that our community understands the direct and tangible effect that their donations can make.

So, in the spirit of William Osler – an immensely influential Canadian physician, and one of the founders of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine – we'd like to focus not on the business side of what we do, but on the human one. We want to shine a light on how incredible it is when a community comes together to improve its common good and share a genuine compassion for one another. That is a trait hard to measure – but we see it in every single corner of our little piece of Southeastern Alberta.

Thank you for being on this journey with us, and we hope you enjoy it as much as we do.

Sincerely,



**Heather Bach**  
Executive Director



# The Grateful Patient & Family Program

It's hard to be in a hospital, recovering from illness or injury. Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of doctors, nurses, and healthcare staff, this time spent in treatment can be life-changing.

The idea for the **Grateful Patient & Family Program** took root in the many words of gratitude and appreciation we have heard from people after treatment. The program is designed for people to:

- Directly recognize and thank someone who made their hospital stay better.
- Inspire healthcare workers through personal impact stories.
- Help tomorrow's patients get better care through donations to areas of greatest need, or another of your choosing.

If you have a story of gratitude to share about your experience as a patient, caregiver, or family member, or if you would like to make a Grateful Patient donation, contact Sue at the Medicine Hat Health Foundation office at **403-528-8133** or email [sue@ourhealthfoundation.com](mailto:sue@ourhealthfoundation.com).

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*The quality of care that I received at Medicine Hat Hospital was above and beyond. The volunteer wayfinder that greeted me was very pleasant and welcoming. The staff was friendly and made me feel comfortable with my procedure. The Grateful Patient program has allowed me to show my appreciation for the level of care I received.*

– Anonymous

Elaine Freedman  
Grateful Patient



# Gifts from (& for) the Heart

Have you ever had an “echocardiogram”? Much like the ultrasound technology used to check on fetal health, echocardiograms are ultrasound images of the heart in motion. They provide a visualization of the heart's chambers and valves and offer insights into how the blood pumps through them.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, last year the Foundation allocated \$246,000

in funding for the Diagnostic Imaging (DI) department. These funds purchased inpatient echocardiography equipment at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital – new machines that are more portable than ever, even capable of going directly to patients' bedsides. We are so grateful for your support in making this happen and aiding DI in improving access to this important diagnostic procedure.

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# A Great Year for Kidney Care

Our kidneys do so much for us – filtering toxins and waste, all day, every day. We're always glad when we can do something nice in return! This year, Kidney Care had \$45,000 of wish list items fulfilled by two donors, including one who left a gift in their will:

- A new body composition monitor, which determines individual fluid status and body composition and helps avoid fluid overload (a common condition for dialysis patients)
- 3 dialysis treatment chairs and 4 specialty cushions for comfort
- 6 bike attachments so patients can “cycle” while undergoing treatment
- 4 portable vital signs monitors, and 4 portable pulse oximetry monitoring systems
- Stethoscopes, thermometers, and over-bed tables



# Legacy Giving

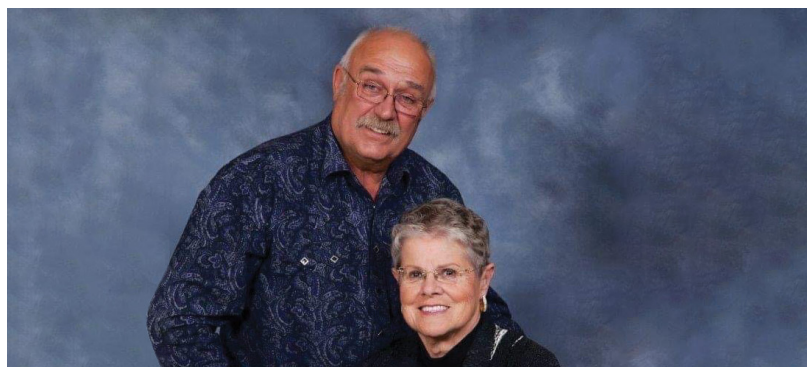
As we get older, we naturally start to think about how to best leave our assets and affairs after we're gone. How can we do the most good for our family, community, and ourselves, and leave a legacy to be proud of?

For most people, the answer is simple: **gift in will, or legacy giving.**

This is the process of arranging donations now so that the charitable organization of your choice will realize benefits in the future. Planned gifts can include bequests, gifts of life insurance policies, donations of RRSPs/RRIFs, charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts.

A legacy gift to the Medicine Hat Health Foundation has a variety of benefits across your estate and family. It not only makes a difference for your loved ones – it will also directly benefit local healthcare, now and in the future.

If this is something you'd like to discuss further, start by contacting your financial or legal advisor, or visit the Will Power website at [www.willpower.ca](http://www.willpower.ca). You can also reach out to Valerie by calling **403-528-8133** or sending an email to [valerie@ourhealthfoundation.ca](mailto:valerie@ourhealthfoundation.ca).



**Brian and Darlene Neigum,**  
Healthcare Legacy Supporters

## Tara & Dennis

Tara never met her partner's brother, Dennis – he passed away at age 21, after a lifelong struggle with muscular dystrophy. But even so, the power of his legacy is still making an impact.

This is because Tara has included a future gift in her will to honour Dennis's memory: donations to the hospital department that treats people with physical health issues. In the future, this gift will allow our occupational therapists to purchase equipment to assist people with debilitating and mobility diseases. We were honoured to assist Tara with the wording in her estate plan, ensuring her future legacy gift will be used according to her wishes.



***I appreciate and understand that not everyone is able-bodied and gets to go to work and live a so-called normal life. Every aspect of Dennis's life was different due to his disease. We tend to take our health for granted.***

Now, their two stories will continue to impact the community – more than 40 years after Dennis passed away.

# Giving Hope for Mental Health

Over a year ago, we launched what has become one of our most successful campaigns to date: Giving Hope for Mental Health. Focusing on the growing mental health crisis within Southeastern Alberta, the campaign worked to illustrate the need for further support and normalize the discussion surrounding a usually taboo topic.

Thanks to immense community support from individuals and organizations, the campaign was a large part of a record-breaking fundraising year – bringing in just over \$400,000, with more work to be completed.

## What Your Donations Did

- Provided new mattresses, an all-season walking path, yard furniture, a washing machine, and properly landscaped areas for the Medicine Hat Recovery Center.
- Funded a recumbent bike and summer programming at Palliser Adolescent Services (PAS), a day program for youths in grades 7-12 experiencing mental health and/or addiction
- Enabled renovations, safety upgrades, and a new specialized bed purchase for a dedicated mental health room in pediatrics, allowing youth in crisis to have a safe space.
- Helped the adult inpatient psychiatric unit at the MHRH get funds for 31 chairs for patient rooms, a new patient washing machine, a tub lift, a recumbent exercise bike, a refrigerator, patio furniture, and two specialized beds for mental health treatment.
- Enlisted local artist Paintergirl to create custom murals for the hallway leading into the inpatient psychiatric unit. These uplifting pieces welcome patients and families with imagery of the Saamis Tepee, Police Point Park, and the South Saskatchewan River.
- Donations allocated to Addictions & Mental Health ensure that the mental health programs have often-overlooked but important items –journals, stationery, writing utensils, personal care/comfort items, socks and slippers, distraction tools, and more.

I'M FINE



**GO FURTHER THAN FINE –  
HEAR WHAT ISN'T BEING SAID.**

## Mental Health Resources in Medicine Hat & District

Mental health is an important part of overall health and should get just as much care and attention. If you need help, here are some additional resources from the community and beyond.

### General Resources

- [ahs.ca/helpintoughtimes](https://ahs.ca/helpintoughtimes)
- Mental Health Helpline: 1-877-303-2642
- Provincial social and support resources: call 211 or visit [ab.211.ca](https://ab.211.ca)
- Reach out to Health Link by calling 811 within Alberta (free 24/7)

### Addictions Help

- A list of programs, counselling, and treatment options is available at [ahs.ca/amh](https://ahs.ca/amh)
- 24/7 Addiction Helpline at 1-866-332-2322
- Access Addiction & Mental Health line at 1-888-594-0211
- Medicine Hat and Area AHS Addiction & Mental Health office: 403-529-3500 (adult), 403-529-3582 (child, youth, and family), 403-529-9021 (Recovery Centre)

### Crisis Prevention

- Crisis Text Line: Text CONNECT to 741741 (adult) or 686868 (youth)
- Canada Suicide Prevention Service: 1-833-456-4566 (available 24/7)
- Hope for Wellness for Indigenous People: 1-855-242-3310, or online chat at [hopeforwellness.ca](https://hopeforwellness.ca)
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
- Distress Centre Crisis Line: 403-266-HELP (available 24/7)



# Upcoming Changes to Lab Services

Do you have an appointment for upcoming community lab services? As of February 28, 2023, the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital laboratory is shifting its capabilities to focus on emergency, inpatient and ambulatory patients within the hospital. Community patients will be directed to the community lab at 44 Carry Drive S.E.

Alberta Precision Laboratories is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Alberta Health Services, delivering high-quality, responsive diagnostic lab services to Albertans across our healthcare system.

For over 60 years, DynaLIFE has been a leading Alberta-based medical laboratory. Their 1,400 employees offer a range of diagnostic testing services to more than 2,000 physicians involved with millions of annual patient visits.

## Why is this change happening?

This change is a step towards the larger transition of community lab services from Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) to DynaLIFE Medical Laboratories. By doing so, APL can maintain better lab quality, efficiency, and sustainability for Alberta's growing population and demands.

## Will this affect existing appointments?

Since the end of November, all appointments booked for Feb. 28 or later have automatically been redirected to the community lab on Carry Drive. If you have any questions or want to check the status of your appointment, you can visit the community lab website at [albertaprecisionlabs.ca](http://albertaprecisionlabs.ca) or call 1-877-868-6848.



# Three Cheers for Our Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital part of any healthcare team, helping to improve the patient experience and performing important roles throughout our facilities. From wayfinders that greet patients and families to the smiling faces in the hospital gift shop, our volunteers represent the best of our community and ourselves.

So, why not become one yourself?

We're always looking for people who want to give back to the community and help others during difficult times. These roles can be consistent or casual in the gift shop or cancer clinic, or involve welcoming, wayfinding, unit orientation, visitation, entertainment, and more.

Such roles are perfect for students, retirees, philanthropists, or anyone looking to expand their social network and give back to the community. Volunteers should:

- Be comfortable in a healthcare setting
- Be friendly, with a positive attitude
- Be non-judgmental, but have good judgment

- Be willing to make a regular commitment of time
- Be self-starters and have well-developed interpersonal and communication skills
- Have good physical endurance

If you are interested in a volunteer opportunity or would like more information, contact Alexa at the gift shop by calling 403-529-8863 or sending an email to [alexa@ourhealthfoundation.ca](mailto:alexa@ourhealthfoundation.ca). You can also call the hospital's Volunteer Services department at 403-529-8847.



# Better Information, Better Outcomes: Launching Connect Care

In healthcare, having the right information is the key to success. That's why the ongoing launches of Connect Care have been so exciting! Connect Care is an Alberta-wide, electronic clinical information system, making it easier for both patients and healthcare workers to stay updated on necessary medical details. As the program continues to roll out further, it will transform the way information is stored, shared, and used in different healthcare regions across the province.

Connect Care will house all AHS, partner, and affiliate medical records. It will have all the necessary information to support and guide decisions where Connect Care is the primary record of health management. Patients will also be able to access their health information through Connect Care's patient portal, MyAHS Connect.

As one of the Alberta Health Services' highest organizational priorities, Connect Care is moving closer to its goal of full implementation across the province by 2024. Since the first launch in late 2019 at the Walter C. Mackenzie Campus and other sites in the Edmonton Zone, progress has been steady with additional launches occurring around Alberta. Sites across all zones now use Connect Care, and in November 2023, Launch 7 will include the full South Zone of AHS.



# A Compassionate Community of Generosity and Hope



At the Medicine Hat Health Foundation, we believe that everyone has a role to play in enhancing healthcare in our community – and that it doesn't take grand gestures to make a big difference. So, as we celebrate an inspiring year of unity and shared compassion, we are so grateful for all who are helping us turn our goals into reality.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to every sponsor and every donor for every gift – large, small, and everywhere in between.



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