

President's Report

Chuck Connor

The Gabriola Community Health Centre

- In 2006 - A vision for better health care on Gabriola began to emerge as residents looked for ways to overcome the lack of health care facilities and services as well as a means to attract and retain doctors on the island.
- In 2008 - Gabriolans gave the Gabriola Health Care Foundation ("GHCF") a mandate to develop a community owned urgent treatment facility, a primary care medical clinic and to promote primary health care services on the island.
- In 2012 - With incredible determination, fundraising and volunteering, the community completed construction and opened the doors to the Gabriola Community Health Centre.
- Today the Health Centre is in full operation, debt free, and provides the community with a well-equipped urgent treatment facility together with a very effective model of team based primary health care offering a broad range of health services.

The Gabriola Health Care Foundation

Currently the Foundation serves a number of important roles including:

- Supporting and participating in the recruitment and retention of physicians,
- Collaborating with the Health Authority and others to bring appropriate health services and programs to Gabriola, and
- On behalf of the community, assuming the responsibility as owner and landlord of the Health Centre for all administration, maintenance, tenant relations as well as financial management and long-term capital planning for the facility itself.

The Urgent Treatment Facility (the "UTF")

- The UTF contains the specialized medical equipment and supplies necessary to treat patients requiring urgent medical care.
- The Clinic doctors respond to nearly 1,300 emergency cases annually.
- Typically, 90% of those patients are successfully treated in the UTF and are able to return directly home, eliminating many trips to Nanaimo and reducing the case load on the busy Nanaimo hospital emergency room.
- Patients with the most serious conditions are stabilized in the UTF and transferred by ambulance or helicopter to hospital emergency rooms in Nanaimo or Victoria for further treatment.
- Island Health's Home Care Nurses treat well over 1,000 patients annually in the UTF thereby providing greater efficiencies in nursing services.

- A plastic and reconstructive surgeon as well as a general surgeon see patients in the UTF on their regular visits to Gabriola.

The Health Care Providers

All medical services and treatment of patients are provided by the various health care providers, each of whom lease space within the health centre and employ their own health care professionals, staff and administration.

- Gabriola Medical Clinic
 - Doctors Mierzewski, Sandell and Thorne lease space in the Health Centre and operate their busy family practice as well as treating patients requiring emergency care in the UTF.
 - The doctors work in close collaboration with various health care professionals from Island Health, all of whom treat patients within the Health Centre. This provides an excellent level of interdisciplinary team-based care for patients.
- The Island Health Authority
 - Island Health leases space in the Health Centre, including a portion of the UTF as well as the Telehealth, Nurses and Mental Health Rooms.
 - The Home Care nurses treat many of their patients in the UTF.
 - A psychiatrist sees patients both on regular visits to the Health Centre or via Telehealth services available in the Clinic.
 - A mental health and an addictions nurse see many patients in the Health Centre
 - A social worker and a mental health clinician help guide patients through the many support services available to residents.
- **Life Labs** – Provides medical laboratory services 5 days a week.
- **Gabriola Dental** - Operates a modern dental and oral hygiene clinic.
- **Claire MacDonald, RMT** - Provides massage therapy services.

Facility Management, Administration and Maintenance

- Funding to cover all operating costs of the health centre is derived primarily through the tenant's lease payments with the exception of a small amount of donations. There is currently no ongoing Government or Health Authority funding other than lease payments for the space actually used by Island Health in the delivery of their health services.
- Additional revenue generated by Island Health's recent leasing of 1/3 of the UTF as well as the nurse's room, Telehealth and mental health rooms has allowed GHCF to contract a significant portion of maintenance work, placing less reliance on volunteers.
- This additional revenue, together with a bequest from the estate of former Gabriola artist Mary Gay Brooks, has also allowed GHCF to begin building a Health Centre Renewal fund for

the purpose of replacing or upgrading all building components including mechanical equipment, computer systems, medical equipment, etc. as they reach the end of their useful lifespans. This significant fund will ensure we have the funds available to ensure the health centre is maintained in top condition and upgraded in the years ahead.

- A current priority for GHCF is to hire a part time administrator and engage a bookkeeper and accountant to relieve the significant workload on current volunteers which is not sustainable in the long term for a facility of this complexity.
- However, funding for these objectives is not yet fully realized and GHCF will continue discussions with both the Ministry of Health and the Health Authority to discuss support for the UTF in order to ensure the long term sustainability of the Health Centre.
- GHCF was recently successful in receiving grants through the BC and Canadian Association of Community Health Centres for close to \$30,000 which helped to offset costs associated with COVID 19 such as additional infection control procedures and tenant rent relief.

Gabriola is well served!

- Without question, the primary health care services on Gabriola have come a long way since 2006.
- Island Health has significantly increased the primary health care services now available to all Gabriolans and visitors to Gabriola.
- The Gabriola Medical Clinic has become a very busy family practice and together with the health care professionals from Island Health provides an outstanding model of team-based care to their patients.
- The Gabriola Health Care Foundation is very grateful to our doctors who are willing to be on call at any hour to treat patients who are in need of urgent medical care in the UTF. It is only with the dedication and caring of these doctors, and with the support of their families, that this excellent service is available to all residents and visitors to Gabriola.
- GHCF wishes to thank everyone, and specially Dr. Bosman on his recent retirement, who has helped make the Gabriola Community Health Centre the success it is today.