

ourpulse

New technology introduced at WGH to support medication safety

Yukon's hospitals have further strengthened safe medication practices with the introduction in February of new automated drug dispensing cabinets to Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH).

These high-tech devices now in WGH's emergency department and medical/surgical units provide the hospital with an advanced tool that not only securely stores medications, but also offers additional safety measures. With a quick tap of a fingerprint, nurses can access a patient's profile and select the appropriate medication. The cabinet will then unlock and lights will guide the nurse to the appropriate compartment/bin with medication.

"Medication safety is a significant and ongoing priority for our hospitals," says Claire Hills, Registered Nurse and Clinical Nurse Educator. "As part of this effort, we look at practices and tools that will help us continuously improve.

This pharmacy automation technology gives our entire team an extra level of support to ensure we provide safe and excellent hospital care."

The new cabinets can dispense various forms of medication – such as tablets, liquids, injectables and IV solutions. They also work in conjunction with a secure, mobile cart to transport medication directly to the patient's bedside – which means medications can be administered more quickly and with less room for error.

Automated drug cabinets are quickly becoming the standard in hospitals across Canada. In addition to providing timely and secure access, they can track medication inventory and enable

Submitted photo

Clinical Nurse Leader Peggy Heynen looks up a patient's medication information from one of WGH's automated drug cabinets (in background).

Fingerprint scanning is just one of the cabinet's safety measures

future enhancements – such as a bedside bar code scanner system that is an additional measure to verify the right patient receives right medication.

"We've already taken a number of steps to enhance safety," says Yukon Hospitals' CEO Jason Bilsky. "We've reviewed our medication policies and adopted best practices

such as 'tall man' lettering to help distinguish sound-alike or look-alike drugs by spelling part of the drug's name with upper case letters."

What's more, all three hospitals have also introduced 'smart' IV pumps with built-in drug information that ensures accurate and safe medication doses.

Helping to enrich the patient experience Volunteer at the hospital

The community has always been a big part of Yukon's three hospitals – and recently we introduced a formal volunteer program to encourage even more Yukoners to bring their passion to our team and help us enrich the patient experience.

There are several volunteer opportunities available now at Whitehorse General Hospital:

- **Friendly visitors** in WGH's Elder Care Unit assist with activities such as offering companionship and engaging in social activities.
- **Comfort care providers** in Karen's Room (chemotherapy room) assist with a number of patient comfort activities such as providing pillows and blankets, offering companionship, preparing snacks and answering the phone.

- **Information desk** volunteers create a welcoming environment by greeting patients/visitors, responding to general inquiries or providing directions to hospital services.

More opportunities will be available across our three hospitals in the near future.

When you volunteer at the hospital, you can make a difference and have an experience like no other in an inspiring and social environment. You will learn, grow and share as part of a health team and community that cares for Yukoners. This is an opportunity to make each day brighter – for you and others.

More information about volunteering at the hospital and how to apply is available at yukonhospitals.ca/volunteer or you can contact us at volunteer@wgh.yk.ca or 867-393-8673.

Volunteers are already in place at WGH and are helping patients in many areas, including the hospital's Elder Care Unit.

Volunteer opportunities

- Be a friend through social interaction, recreation activities and companionship
- Welcome people to the hospital and connect visitors and patients to the services they need
- Offer comfort for patients and families
- Support our highly skilled staff in a dynamic professional environment

What you can expect

- To be part of our dedicated team
- Opportunities to share your abilities and learn new skills in an inspiring and dynamic environment
- Orientation and training as well as on-going guidance and support
- Recognition for the amazing contribution you make to the health and wellness of Yukoners
- Opportunities to complete high school volunteer service requirements

Yukon launches colon cancer screening and awareness campaign

The Government of Yukon, in partnership with Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon Hospital Corporation, launched the territory-wide ‘ColonCheck’ screening program and an awareness campaign promoting pre-screening for colon cancer, which is the second highest cause of cancer death in Yukon for men, and third highest for women.

“I am encouraging all Yukoners aged 50 to 74 to talk with their health provider at their next checkup about getting screened for colorectal cancer,” says Yukon’s Chief Medical Officer

of Health Dr. Brendan Hanley. “If caught early, colon cancer is 90 per cent curable.”

The screening involves taking the ‘FIT’ – a colon check you can do easily in the privacy of your own bathroom. The FIT kit is available from your physician or primary health care provider and includes everything you need to take a small stool sample. You can then return it safely and securely for screening to the Whitehorse General Hospital lab or your closest community health centre.

WGH laboratory technologist Penny Elliot demonstrates how the hospital’s new analyzer tests for potential signs of colon cancer.

“Whitehorse General Hospital is pleased to be part of a collaborative effort to ensure Yukoners have access to cancer screening,” says Yukon Hospitals’ CEO Jason Bilsky. “With the support of partners, including the Government of Yukon, we’ve been able to make key investments in our people and lab diagnostic equipment in order to provide timely results and treatment.” Since fall 2016, 686 people have been screened for colon cancer.

As part of this effort, Government of Yukon brought Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada’s Giant Colon Tour to Whitehorse to promote the new campaign during Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in March. The Giant Colon Tour has been created to inform the public about the signs and symptoms

Submitted photo



Yukon Health & Social Services’ Diane Kirchgatter shows off the new ColonCheck campaign poster and one of the take home FIT kits.

of colorectal cancer as well as the other diseases of the colon.

Being physically active, eating lots of fruits, vegetables and fibre, reducing intake of red and processed meats, and minimizing alcohol intake can help reduce the chances of colorectal cancer.

To learn more about the FIT test and colorectal cancer, visit the ColonCheck Yukon website at hss.gov.yk.ca/coloncheck.php

Working together to learn and improve care

RN Emilie Nugent listens to the patient simulator’s ‘lungs’ to monitor breathing during a special nurse education session at WGH.

or ‘Sam’ as she is more affectionately known, made its first visit to WGH in February, to give nurses an opportunity to hone their range of skills from checking vital signs and monitoring breathing to performing CPR, and a range of other life-saving interventions.

In addition to producing sounds of breathing, coughing and a heartbeat, Sam can also be filled with coloured liquids to simulate bleeding, sweat, tears, and urine. She even blinks.

We’re always looking for new ways to better support our people through continued skills training,” says Geoff Zaparinuk, WGH’s Director of Patient Care.

“From running mock scenarios in our operating rooms to practicing for emergency situations, our goal is to ensure that we have the best equipment and the best people in place to handle any situation.”

Following the visit to WGH, Sam also made a trip to the community hospital in Dawson City for more nurse training. Dawson hospital staff were joined by physicians and members of Yukon Emergency Medical Services (paramedics) to work through several simulated ‘emergency’ scenarios.

“We are pleased this pilot initiative to share the PN program’s patient simulator has been a success,” says Andrew Richardson, Dean of Applied Arts at Yukon College. “Going forward, Yukon College will be

Dawson hospital staff, along with local physicians and Yukon Emergency services, practice mock emergency scenarios on Yukon College’s SimMan 3G patient simulator.

exploring ways in which we can further share this important asset to aid the continuing education of Yukon medical professionals.”

This joint training exercise marked the first time that the four groups were able to offer this type of educational opportunity for Yukon health providers.

Thank you to the Yukon College team. We hope to partner more in the near future.

A group of nurses at Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) were recently presented with a unique learning opportunity to practice important skills on a patient.

However, this was no ordinary patient – ‘she’ is actually SimMan 3G, the new fully-interactive patient simulator used in Yukon College’s Practical Nursing diploma program. The new remote-controlled simulator,

Submitted photo



Submitted photo



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Message from the Board of Trustees Chair

Our hospitals are an important part of your health care team

As a long-time Yukoner, I'm honored to for the opportunity to serve as chair of the Yukon Hospital Corporation's Board of Trustees. I'm just as excited to work with one of Canada's most passionate and dedicated team of health care providers.

Providing quality care is truly a team effort. These committed and enthusiastic health care professionals and volunteers are at your bedside and behind the scenes, ensuring you are comfortable and well cared for. Above all, we recognize that patients, families and loved ones are the most valued part of the team.

Our hospitals play an important role in your health and well being. Whether you come to our hospitals for a visit, test or treatment, we want it to be the best experience possible and one that meets your needs.

Beyond our three hospitals, we are also part of a larger health system. Yukoners rely on

us to work with our partners to ensure each and every person receives the right care in the right place and at the right time.

We've been working closely with our partners in Yukon government to build a new emergency department at WGH, so at any time of day or night, we'll be able to continue to provide safe and excellent care. This commitment to a modernized facility ensures Yukoners have improved access to emergency care when they need it most.

We also work with partners in Continuing Care, Home Care and Community Nursing on a daily basis to manage the growing pressure on our hospitals and across the health system. We've been able to work together to open additional long-term care beds and develop innovative solutions such as providing recreational and speech therapy to patients who no longer require hospital care, but are awaiting

placement in a more appropriate level of care. Your health care team is working for you. Our hospitals are great facilities with experienced and skilled health care providers. My goal is to work with the Board, our partners and the entire YHC team to ensure we continue to provide the best possible care in a way that meets the needs of all Yukoners.



Brian Gillen, Chair
Board of Trustees
Yukon Hospital Corporation

Setting new standards in Canadian healthcare

Yukon physician and WGH pharmacist develop frostbite treatment that's a Canadian first

Yukon is well known for its cold climate, and now a local physician and pharmacist from Whitehorse General Hospital are garnering national attention for a new way to more effectively treat frostbite.

Dr. Alex Poole teamed up with hospital pharmacist Josianne Gauthier to introduce to Canada a frostbite treatment that's regularly used in Europe – a unique approach for the most severe cases that involves the traditional method of rapid rewarming of skin in combination with a medication called iloprost in hopes of reducing the chance of amputation.

"At the time, this approach was not well-known here and the drug was not available for use in North America," says Dr. Poole. "We decided to work together to see what we could do to adopt this treatment method in the Yukon – and this started a series of discussions with Health Canada." The pair was granted special access by the federal agency to use the drug in the Yukon – the first and only Canadian jurisdiction known to receive such permission. Iloprost is used mainly to reopen closed blood vessels – something which helps cold injury patients by moving blood to frostbite-affected areas of the body.

Over the course of several months, two patients with severe frostbite were treated at WGH, using rapid rewarming and medication.



WGH pharmacist Josianne Gauthier, along with Yukon physician Dr. Alex Poole published the results of their new frostbite treatment protocol in last December's issue of the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

This led to positive outcomes for both – no amputation was required and no minimal long-term effect from the cold injury. The results were published as a case study in last December's Canadian Medical Association Journal. "This development has really put Yukon and WGH on the map," says Gauthier. "Having this treatment method available close to home really benefits our hospital and patients, especially considering the cold climate we live in." She adds that other facilities from across the country are contacting the pair to learn more about this improved treatment.

Since the case study was published, Yellowknife's Stanton Territorial Hospital has also applied to Health Canada to

use iloprost for its frostbite-related cases. However, Dr. Poole cautions that the drug alone is not a cure-all and that effective frostbite treatment involves a comprehensive approach using established evidence. In more severe cases, additional medication may be required to prevent blood clots from forming. "It is critically important to seek care for frostbite within the first 24 hours of exposure," he says. "Unfortunately, many cases of the injury still go unchecked or people wait too long to seek medical assistance."

Dr. Poole and Gauthier are now developing on a new treatment protocol for hypothermia, designed to work with the frostbite treatment method on

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE FROSTBITE

- **Protect your skin from further injury.** Tuck bare hands inside your armpits. Protect your face, nose, and ears by covering them with dry fabric. Don't rub the affected area and never rub snow on it.
- **Get out of the cold** and into a warm area as soon as possible.
- **Rapidly warm the frostbitten areas** using water at a temperature as hot as your body can tolerate without causing further pain. Fast rewarming is the key to effective treatment.
- **Do not let the affected area refreeze.** An early refreezing injury can cause irreversible damage.
- Most cases of frostbite never seek medical assistance. **If you think you have frostbite, seek medical attention fast to avoid further injury.**

patients suffering from extreme cold exposure. He is scheduled to speak at the Canadian Association for Emergency Physician's national conference this June in the hopes of creating a new nationwide standard of cold injury treatment.

Building the very best health care, closer to home

Hospital expansion moving ahead on-schedule, on-budget

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The cold winter weather hasn't slowed crews working on the Whitehorse General Hospital Expansion as the project remains on-schedule to open the emergency department in early 2018.

After completing the majority of work to the outside of the new building in November, making it clad to the weather before winter, construction shifted inside to focus on the new emergency department's interior.

In the coming month, floors and doors will be installed and some furniture will be put in place as the new treatment areas begin to take shape. Once our information systems and technology has been moved into the building, the stage will be set for the end of construction this fall.

Once the building is complete, hospital staff and physicians will take several months to move into and train in the new space as well as test all systems and equipment.

While construction is focused mostly within the new two-storey building, additional work is being done to connect the existing hospital to the new facility. This includes upgrading electrical and mechanical systems and creating new doorways, windows and hallways. The hospital was able to take the opportunity to install new procedure lights in its two operating rooms as other expansion-related work was completed.



The new emergency entrance is finished using natural-like materials and elements that will be found throughout the new building. Once the canopy is finished, it will look similar to the bottom of a canoe.



Construction crews have made significant progress over the past few months, as the hospital prepares to open its new emergency department in early 2018.

As opening day draws closer, the hospital will offer public tours of the new emergency department. It will be an exclusive opportunity for Yukoners to see the modern space and get more familiar with where to go for emergency care.

The \$72 million project, funded by the Yukon Government, will create a more modern

emergency department and critical care observation area. The state-of-the-art facility is designed to meet high standards for infection control, safety, comfort and security, which will create an improved healing space for our patients and enhanced work environment for our health care teams.



As part of the 'tie-in' process of attaching the new building with the existing hospital, current operating rooms received new upgrades. These energy-efficient, state of the art LED overhead lights (pictured) were installed in both operating rooms to provide better lighting for staff during surgical procedures.



STAY UP-TO-DATE ON EXPANSION PROGRESS

We have a number of publications and resources available for Yukoners to stay connected with Whitehorse General Hospital Expansion, including a recent edition of our project report. Inside the pages, you'll learn more about:

- Key phases and milestones of the project
- Local involvement by Yukon sub-trades and businesses
- Opening day planning and preparation
- Planning for the future use of space at the hospital

Download a copy of the project report along with a number of other resources on our website: yukonhospitals.ca/WGHexpansion

Investing back to local businesses

Local businesses and specialized trades have made many significant contributions to WGH Expansion.

As part of the commitment to ensure as many Yukon companies as possible benefit from the hospital expansion, both Yukon Hospitals and PCL have worked together to promote local involvement whenever possible.

PCL contracts directly with sub-trades and other vendors to fulfill its obligations on established project budget and timelines. They also monitor

and report on local involvement at the construction site on a monthly basis. Since the site opened in June 2015, local sub-contractors have comprised nearly 60% of all on-site time.

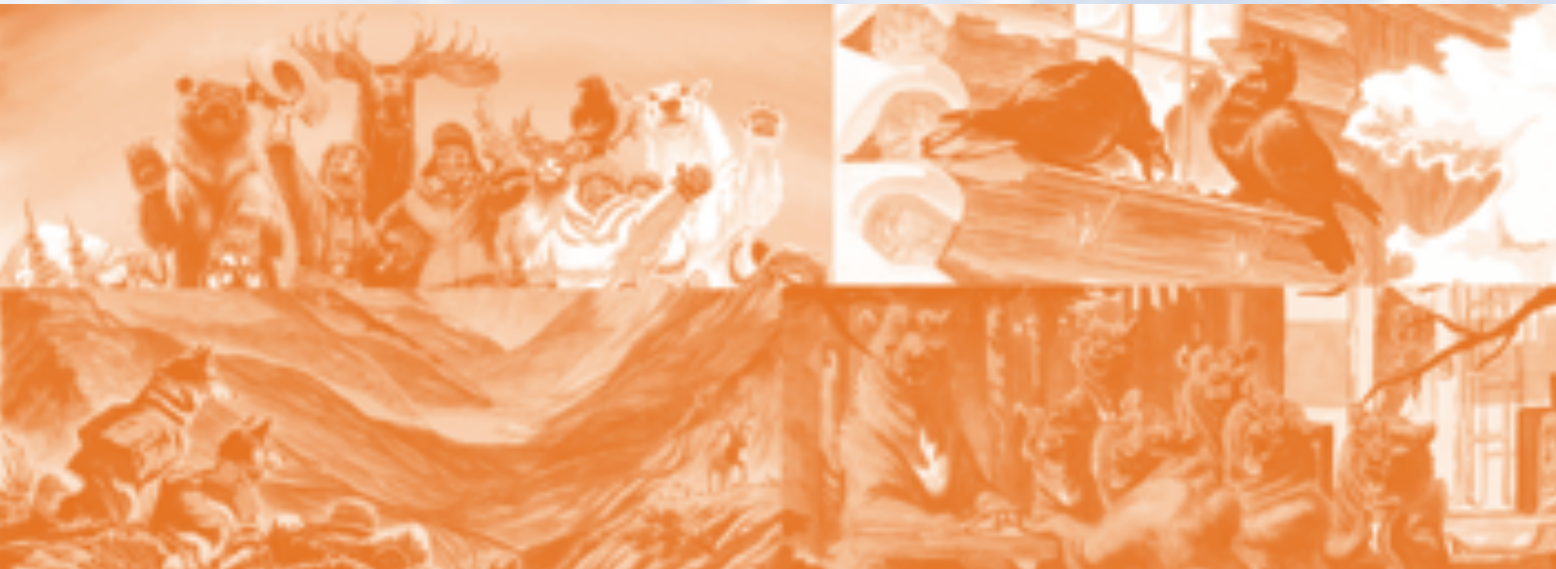
What’s more, 75 local businesses have benefited the project.

From providing accommodations, equipment, and supplies for workers to car rentals, vehicle repairs and signage, many local businesses play a role in making WGH expansion a success.



The existing hospital is reflected in the new expansion’s exterior glass. Several large windows will allow a generous amount of natural light into the new emergency department’s waiting area.

Yukon artist creates lasting impression to bring comfort and cheer at the hospital



A compilation of artwork by local artist Chris Caldwell. These four Yukon-inspired designs will be arranged in a horizontal line to create a new mural outside the windows of WGH’s maternity unit.

A colourful and whimsical mural by a local artist will be installed at Whitehorse General Hospital to help create a more comfortable and healing environment for patients and visitors.

The mural by recognized local artist Chris Caldwell that depicts Yukon landscapes, wildlife and culture will be displayed outside directly across from WGH’s maternity unit on an exterior wall of the hospital’s new two-storey wing. That’s because part of expansion now impacts the south-facing view from several patient rooms.

“We are fortunate to build a new, modern health care facility and keep the flow of natural light into the hospital, but we wanted a creative solution to maintain the inspiring view and get the community involved in the expansion project,” says Jason Bilsky, Yukon Hospitals’ CEO. “Every minute of every day, a Yukoner is going through a significant life experience while in our care. We feel Chris’ work is something that will provide comfort and cheer in a way that improves this experience.”

The mural is a compilation of several different pieces created by Caldwell. Her work was chosen after a call to the arts community last year. Caldwell says she combined several of her existing works to bring the viewer into the heart of the Yukon experience.

“Being at the hospital can be a happy time, but it is often stressful and lonely. I believe that a nice view out the window keeps you connected to the outside world and is helpful whether you’re pacing the corridor during labour or visiting a family member,” she says. “Happy thoughts are a really important at this time, so I chose art that conveyed positive feelings while reflecting the uniqueness of the Yukon.”

The mural is scheduled to be installed in spring 2017 as part of WGH expansion and will also be seen from a new windowed-corridor connecting the existing hospital to the new building.

Enhancing Health Care

eHealth means quicker test results

A significant part of the Yukon eHealth project has aimed to connect the Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) lab with the BC’s Public Health lab, which conducts many specialized tests for Yukon.

With this ‘Lab Information System’ (LIS) now in place, it means that lab orders and results can start flowing directly into the hospital’s main information system that is connected to patient health records.

Once results are received electronically by WGH from the specialized laboratories in BC, the information can be automatically sent to physicians – reducing the time it takes for patients to receive a result. Hospital staff will also be able to monitor trends more easily. This milestone not only improves access to lab results for physicians, but also enhances patient safety as it leaves less room for clerical errors.

This past February, the first lab orders and results for tumour markers and respiratory tests were processed electronically between the BC Centre for Disease Control and the hospital. In the fall of 2015, Yukon Health and Social Services began working with Yukon Hospitals to move forward with the territory’s eHealth project.

Dedicated to safe and excellent hospital care

Our 2016 Long Service Award recipients



Thank you and congratulations
to the following hospital employees:

5 YEARS

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JOSCELYNE BERGEN
LAURA BOWERS
LYNN CHEVERIE
KELLY COZENS
SARAH CROOK
VALERIE EMERY
JOSIANNE GAUTHIER
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DIANA ZAMMIT

30 YEARS

MADELEINE GIRARD
SANDRA LADRET
IRENE ORGAN

Employees of Yukon's hospitals will be honoured this April at a special ceremony in Whitehorse for their long service and dedication to the very best patient care across the territory.

"The passion our employees bring to their work is incredible – and all Yukoners benefit from having them on our team," says Yukon Hospitals' CEO Jason Bilsky. "It's wonderful to see this level of commitment from so many hard-working professionals. Combined, our team represents hundreds of years of service to Yukoners and others who rely on our hospitals."

Donation from Whitehorse retailer keeps patients warm during winter months

For the third time in the past year, a local business has made another generous donation to the First Nations Health Program (FNHP) at Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH).

Several boxes from Marks clothing store in Whitehorse arrived at the hospital, filled with winter coats and hats, mitts, shoes and boots.

The clothing donation estimated at \$4,000 will be provided to patients in need. FNHP was able to maintain an inventory for patients and pass along some of the donated items to Maryhouse and Kaushee's Place, a transition home for women.



The FNHP closet is stuffed full of winter clothing donations.

Local nurse raises funds for humanitarian mission



RN Jessica Wherley (pictured) recently held a bake sale at WGH to fundraise for a humanitarian trip to Central America. The local nurse raised over \$600 toward the upcoming humanitarian mission, where she and her team will provide medical aid in Guatemala to residents dealing with the after-effects of Hurricane Mitch.

Make your visit a positive experience



Everything you need to know starts at
yukonhospitals.ca

Visiting hours • Where to go
What to expect • What to bring
Career opportunities and other
useful information