



**Backgrounder:  
MRI Program at Whitehorse General Hospital**

- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is an advanced test that uses a magnet and pulses of radio waves to make images of organs and structures inside the body. The technique is widely used in hospitals for medical diagnosis, staging of disease and for follow-up.
- MRI is requested by a physician – and is a different and complementary exam to other imaging tests. Its use depends on what your medical provider needs to know. There are many specific reasons to use an MRI such as neurological, musculoskeletal, cardiovascular and oncological investigations, but the test may also be done to provide additional information about an issue seen in a CT scan, x-ray or ultrasound.
- All patients must be screened before they can receive an MRI to see if a scan is appropriate and safe. For example, a patient may not be able to receive a scan due to an existing health condition. What's more, an MRI may not be required when another imaging method is more appropriate.
- The Yukon MRI program is located in a new facility at Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) and will initially conduct about 1,800 patient exams each year. WGH will not provide some very specialized, higher risk procedures such as those with neo-natal patients who require sedation or interventional MRI exams. This means about 5-10% of individuals who require MRI may still have to travel outside of Yukon for a scan.
- The MRI program will serve Yukoners until we determine our own need within the territory before accepting patients from other jurisdictions. Wait times will depend on the demand for the MRI service, however, the program has adopted four priority levels to ensure urgent, semi-urgent, non-urgent and follow-up scans are provided within an established timeframe.
- WGH also offers a range of medical imaging services, including radiography, fluoroscopy, ultrasound, computed tomography (CT) and mammography.
- The new MRI program will meet a significant need as the Yukon government provides medical travel assistance and covered costs for about 600 out-of-territory MRI scans a year.
- The Yukon Hospital Foundation was instrumental in leading a three-year campaign (completed a year ahead of schedule) that successfully raised \$2 million to buy the MRI

scanner through the generous financial support from our communities and donors. YHF continues to raise funds to support Yukon hospitals in addressing priorities and meeting essential equipment needs that enhance our ability to provide safe and excellent care.