![yukon hospital corporation logo]

Yukon Hospital Foundation Chair, Curtis Shaw, Premier Darrell Pasloski, Yukon Hospital Corporation Chair, Craig Tuton, and Health and Social Services Minister Doug Graham officially open Canada's first MRI facility north of 60.

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First MRI north of 60 now open at Whitehorse General Hospital

Whitehorse – The first magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) program in Canada's North has opened at Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) thanks to the joint efforts of the Yukon government, the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the community.

Premier Darrell Pasloski was joined today by Health and Social Services Minister Doug Graham, Yukon Hospital Corporation Chair Craig Tuton and Yukon Hospital Foundation (YHF) Chair Curtis Shaw to cut the ceremonial ribbon on the new building, which is home to the territory's state-of-the-art MRI scanner.

"We are incredibly proud to add MRI to our first-class diagnostic services as it can be used to evaluate with precision a wide range of conditions," says Tuton. "With the new facility, Yukoners have a comfortable environment in which to receive the very best care, closer to home. This means improved and timelier access to an important test, which will result in less travel and quicker diagnosis – an overall more positive patient experience." ***Continued on next page***

Tuton also notes the new facility is open ahead of schedule with the first patient exams scheduled for next week. The new MRI program is initially expected to conduct about 1,800 patient exams each year and is now accepting physician referrals for scans, which are then reviewed for safety and appropriateness.

"We have long recognized the importance of collaboration with health care providers to provide appropriate, affordable and seamless care and services to Yukoners. Working together with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Hospital Foundation on the MRI project is a perfect example of how cooperation can work to benefit all," says Pasloski. "Our government is proud to have invested in this enhancement to health care in Yukon and I'd like to thank all those who helped ensure this facility was delivered to Yukoners ahead of schedule."

The Minister of Health and Social Services echoes the Premier's comments. "We know the stress and strain that people experience when facing medical interventions, particularly when far from home and family. Having an MRI in the territory will reduce that stress and improve services available to Yukoners," says Graham.

YHF spearheaded a successful campaign that raised $2 million for the purchase of the MRI scanner. The Yukon government matched this $2 million in funds and then contributed an additional $2.8 million to build the facility.

"I think Yukoners got behind this effort because we all know of someone who has had to travel out of territory for care and be away from family during a significant test or treatment," says Shaw. "We cannot thank the community enough for its generosity in making this new MRI program a reality and ensuring quality health care is available right here at home."

The new MRI scanner was supplied by Siemens Healthcare Canada Ltd., which secured a third-party contractor West Med to build the new facility with support from many Yukon specialized trades and local services. The new MRI facility will be open to the public this Friday, January 16 from 2-4 p.m. giving Yukoners an opportunity to meet our team and see the facility first-hand.

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