

For immediate release
April 25, 2017

Yukon Hospitals welcome volunteers, celebrate their contribution to safe and excellent care

Whitehorse – In another health care milestone for the Yukon, the territory is now home to one of Canada's first hospital volunteer programs North of 60 – and after only a few short months – is seeing steady growth in community support and participation.

The new program was launched at Whitehorse General Hospital in late 2016 as a way to enrich the great care provided by medical and hospital staff. The initiative now numbers 25 volunteers with more joining the team on a monthly basis. As Canada celebrates [National Volunteer Week from April 23-29](#), we recognize and thank our volunteers for the contribution they make to safe and excellent hospital care.



WGH welcomed its first volunteers in late 2016 to enrich the patient experience. Pictured (left to right) is Alysa Wiens, Brenda Morrison, Dorothy Martin, Paige Williams & Lindsey Page

“The Yukon is a generous community and our hospitals have a tradition of strong volunteer support through the work of individuals and groups such as the WGH Women’s Auxiliary and our spiritual care providers,” says Jason Bilsky, Yukon Hospitals’ CEO. “This new program means we are now able to work more closely with Yukoners to make a hospital stay more comfortable and a better overall experience.”

The first volunteer opportunities are available at WGH and include an Information Desk that welcomes patients and visitors and provides general information about the hospital and its services; a Friendly Visitor that assists older, longer-stay patients in WGH’s

Elder Care Unit through social interaction and companionship; and Comfort Care Provider offering assistance and support to patients receiving cancer treatment.

More volunteer opportunities are being explored as the program looks to expand within WGH and potentially to the community hospitals in Dawson City and Watson Lake in the future.

Bilsky adds that health care is something that is very important to all of us and volunteers have an opportunity to make a real and lasting impact.

“Our hospitals offer a rewarding experience as volunteers work directly with patients, families and our professional staff in a dynamic and inspiring environment,” he says. “No matter your reason for volunteering whether to give back, make friends or gain experience, we have a variety of opportunities to make a real difference in the health of Yukoners.”

To volunteer at the hospital, individuals follow a thorough in-take process, and if accepted, are provided with general orientation and role-specific training. Volunteer hours at the hospital can also be used for students to complete required community service.

“Our volunteers are a valued part of our team,” says Jessie Rushant, a Licensed Practical Nurse in WGH’s Medical Unit who played a role in introducing volunteers. “We really appreciate the time they give to our patients whether it’s to go for a walk, have a chat, bring water or play a game of cards. It allows the hospital team to focus on providing quality care, makes hospital stay more enjoyable and helps with the healing process. Thank you.”

Individuals interested in becoming a hospital volunteer are encouraged to visit www.yukonhospitals.ca/volunteer or contact the Volunteer Services office at (867) 393-8673 or volunteer@wgh.yk.ca.

-30-

Contact:

James Low
Communications, Yukon Hospitals
james.low@wgh.yk.ca
(867) 393-8698

[National Volunteer Week \(April 23-29\)](#) is a way we can thank and recognize all volunteers in our hospitals and across the territory for the vital role they play in helping to build strong, healthy communities.