

\$1.7-million radiology room will allow Lakeshore General to treat more patients in the West Island



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The Lakeshore General Hospital. *FREDERIC HORE / MONTREAL GAZETTE*

A gift from a local foundation will keep thousands of West Island patients closer to home for basic medical procedures. The Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation received \$1.2 million from the Eric T. Webster Foundation to renovate and outfit a new multi-functional radiology room at the Lakeshore General.

The donation, combined with an additional \$500,000 provided by the Lakeshore General foundation, will fund the \$1.7-million project.

With the new radiology room, chemotherapy and dialysis patients are among those who will no longer have to be transferred to other hospitals for some “basic invasive procedures,” said Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation president Heather Holmes. These procedures include inserting shunts and catheters, but Holmes said there are many patients in a variety of departments who could benefit from the new room, including those being treated by surgeons, kidney and cancer specialists, and even patients coming through the emergency room or the obstetrics (maternity) department.

When patients have to be transferred, it affects both the hospital and their families. The hospital must pay for a taxi and patient transport vehicles, as well as nurses to accompany them. Patients' families must also travel longer to see their loved ones while they're in the hospital. The addition of the new scanner will keep patients in the Lakeshore General, and may also free up operating rooms currently used for these types of procedures.

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"At the end of the day, it is going to save money for the hospital, it is going to save time for the hospital. It will also be saving time and energy and resources for patients as well," Holmes said.

Thousands of patients may be treated in the new room over the next year and a half, Holmes said. "It's a large population that is going to be taking advantage of this."

That population will be even larger than initially anticipated. The project was approved under the former CSSS structure in 2015. Under Bill 10, the West Island's CSSS was amalgamated into a CIUSSS with other institutions around Montreal, including the CSSS for Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle, the Grace Dart long-term care centre in Hochelaga and St. Mary's Hospital in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

"As soon as we got the green light from the government to move forward, (the Eric T. Webster Foundation) pledged their financial support," Holmes said. "(The foundation) really believes improving health care in the West Island is a priority," she added.

"We're very lucky to count them among our supporters. It wouldn't happen without them, that's for sure," she added.

The Kirkland-based Webster foundation also supported the new birthing centre at the hospital, which opened in 2012, and donated \$1 million to the West Island Cancer Wellness Centre in December. The Cancer Wellness centre is not affiliated with the Lakeshore General, however.

The foundation's donation will cover the costs of a Siemens Artis Zee ceiling-suspended imaging system and the renovations for the room itself.

The machine has been ordered and construction is ongoing. It will take several months, Holmes said, and she cautioned that unforeseen issues could cause delays. If everything goes well, the room should welcome its first patient later this year.