

my ST. JOSEPH'S

A publication of St. Joseph's Health Care London
WINTER 2021 | ISSUE 03

KEEPING IT SAFE

Our entrances have become a gateway of safety to protect our patients and staff. It's a responsibility more than 160 screeners take very seriously. These "perimeter protectors" are vital in the fight against COVID-19.

A publication of St. Joseph's Health Care London
Winter 2021 | Issue 03

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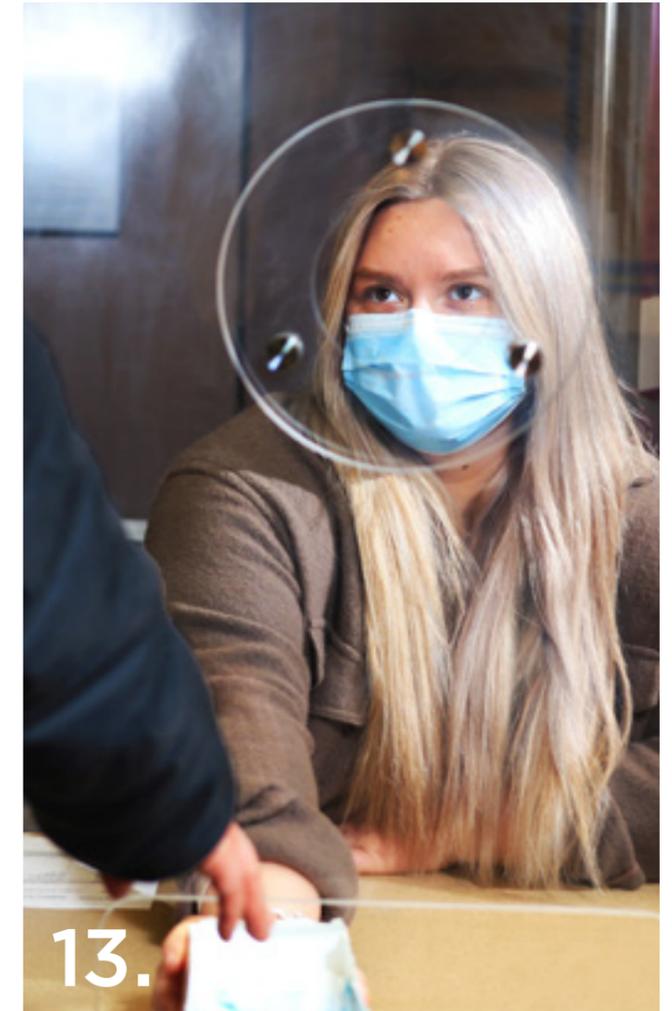
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“It was a whirlwind but I was totally amazed. Nothing but good has come of the break.”

— LEDA JARRETT,
PATIENT, ST. JOSEPH'S
OSTEOPOROSIS AND
BONE DISEASE PROGRAM

Osteoporosis is called the “silent thief” because it quietly, slowly weakens bones and often goes undetected, even after a break occurs, explains endocrinologist Dr. Kristin Clemens, Medical Director of the Osteoporosis and Bone Disease Program. Fractures caused by this bone-deteriorating condition are more common than heart attack, stroke and breast cancer combined.

The fallout can be debilitating, even deadly. Yet many patients with the type of breaks that are a red flag for osteoporosis – like the fractured wrist Leda experienced – don’t get checked for the disease, adds Dr. Clemens.

At St. Joseph’s, a partnership between orthopedic specialists, endocrinologists and Osteoporosis Canada is spotting those red flags and providing patients with the proper care and follow-up they need to prevent further fractures.

The Fracture Liaison Service (FLS) – a fracture prevention program developed by Osteoporosis Canada – means that patients aged 50 years and older who come to HULC



with a “fragility” fracture are identified, assessed for their risk of osteoporosis, and sent for imaging and follow up with the Osteoporosis and Bone Disease Program.

A fragility fracture is any fall from a standing height or less that results in a fracture, says Dr. Clemens. For individuals over age 50, these fractures, which usually happen in the hip, spine, wrist or shoulder, are a warning sign that osteoporosis may be present.

...continued

Thanks to a fracture prevention program at St. Joseph’s Hospital, Leda Jarrett learned her broken wrist was more than a just a break – it was osteoporosis. She is now being treated for the bone-weakening disease to help ensure her first break is also her last.

A LUCKY BREAK

Patients like Leda Jarrett are being assessed for osteoporosis when they come to St. Joseph’s Health Care London with a fracture that raises a red flag for the bone-weakening disease.

It was Leda Jarrett’s first ever broken bone and it has meant more than a year of recovery. Yet the 69-year-old is “happy as a clam” with what has happened since her fall.

After an emergency room visit where the wrist fracture was diagnosed and treated, Leda was referred to the Roth|McFarlane Hand and Upper Limb Centre (HULC) at St. Joseph’s Hospital for an appointment a week later. While registering, a clinician came to talk to her about her medical history and osteoporosis. Within minutes, she was undergoing a bone mineral density test, with the results ready for review at her HULC appointment.

“It was a whirlwind but I was totally amazed,” says Leda. “Nothing but good has come of the break.”

“For individuals over age 50, these fractures, which usually happen in the hip, spine, wrist or shoulder, are a warning sign that osteoporosis may be present.”

The “good” Leda refers to is learning the break was due to osteoporosis and being fast tracked to St. Joseph’s Osteoporosis and Bone Disease Program, where care is focused on prevention.



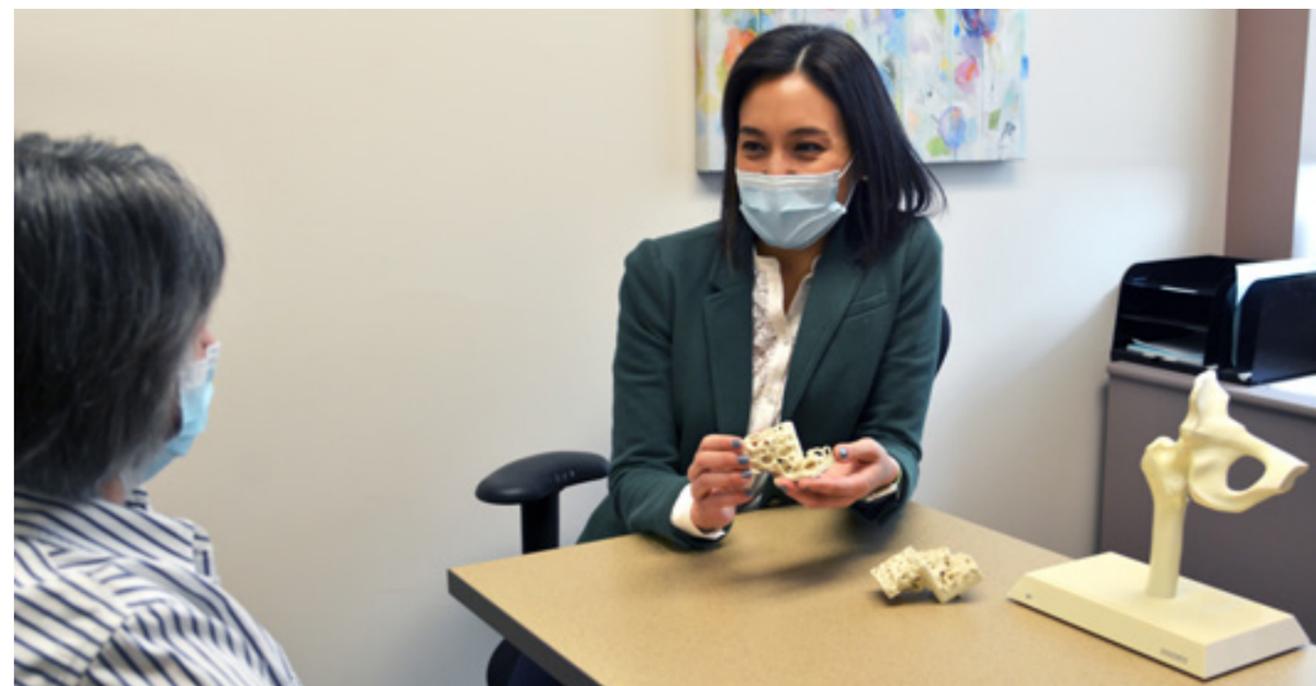
An avid quilter, Leda Jarrett has been able to get back to sewing since breaking her wrist – a fracture that was linked to osteoporosis thanks to a fracture prevention program of St. Joseph’s Health Care London.

Of the 76 patients in St. Joseph's FLS database, 52 have six-month follow-up data available. Of these 52 patients, 35 were newly prescribed an osteoporosis medication during their clinic visit, with 86 per cent continuing to receive osteoporosis treatment, says Dr. Clemens.

"I feel like I'm in good hands. I feel like I won't get lost in the dust."

Leda had a history of low bone density and, years ago, received infusions of a drug to treat the condition. For the past five years, however, she thought she was fine – until she fell in her garden and broke her wrist. Now, through diet, exercise, treatment, education and ongoing monitoring, she's hoping her first broken bone was also her last.

"I feel like I'm in good hands," says Leda of St. Joseph's comprehensive osteoporosis program. "I feel like I won't get lost in the dust."



Education is a key component of the Osteoporosis and Bone Disease Program at St. Joseph's Hospital, where endocrinologist Dr. Kristin Clemens is leading a fracture prevention program for individuals over age 50 who come to the hospital with a break that raises a red flag osteoporosis. The goal is to catch and treat osteoporosis early and prevent further fractures.

OSTEOPOROSIS BY THE NUMBERS

50

YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

is the most common age range affected by osteoporosis. However, it can affect people at almost any age.



PEOPLE LIVING WITH OSTEOPOROSIS

face a reduced quality of life, lowered self-esteem, reduction or loss of mobility, disfigurement, a lack of independence and in some cases, death – 28 per cent of women and 37 per cent of men who suffer a hip fracture will die within the following year.

2 MILLION

CANADIANS

are affected by osteoporosis.



80%

of fragility fractures occur in menopausal women over the age of 50.

FRACTURES FROM OSTEOPOROSIS

are more common than heart attack, stroke and breast cancer combined.

1 IN 3 WOMEN & 1 IN 5 MEN
minimum will break a bone due to osteoporosis in their lifetime.



Laura Veenstra, left, a therapeutic recreational therapist at St. Joseph's Health Care London's Parkwood Institute, receives stroke rehabilitation kits from Western University students Varunaavee Sivashanmugathas, right, and Ganathyashan (Yashan) Chelliahpillai.

EQUIPPING STROKE PATIENTS FOR SUCCESS

Western University students get StrokeSMaRT in collaboration with clinicians at Parkwood Institute.

It's an assortment of everyday items, but its impact – and how it came to be – is impressive and inspiring.

Upon learning that the COVID-19 pandemic was delaying recovery for individuals who had suffered a stroke, two third-year science students from Western University had an idea. Passionate about health care, they partnered with the Community Stroke Rehabilitation Team (CSRT) at St. Joseph's Health Care London's Parkwood Institute to develop and distribute rehabilitation kits.

"We heard how patients with strokes were struggling, especially as many with symptoms were not immediately going to the emergency room because they were afraid of the virus," says Ganathyashan (Yashan) Chelliahpillai.

Without quick assessment and treatment, stroke patients are at risk of more severe and long-lasting complications requiring more intensive rehabilitation.

Yashan, along with fellow student Varunaavee Sivashanmugathas, acted fast. Guided by the CSRT, they launched a stroke rehabilitation kit dubbed StrokeSMaRT (Stroke Self-Management and Rehabilitation Tools).

Manny Paiva, Coordinator of the Stroke Rehabilitation Program at St. Joseph's, was impressed by the duo's ingenuity.

"The positive energy that both Yashan and Varunaavee have brought to this project has been amazing. It's been great to be a part of this initiative."

The goal in developing the rehabilitation kits is to promote independence while assisting patients in their rehabilitation journey. Each kit contains a variety of simple items that can be used in exercises to build strength and fine motor control such as a tennis ball, deck of cards, bricks and building blocks, popsicle sticks, toothpicks, paper clips, beads and string, practice buttons and zippers, and a puzzle book. Informational materials are also included.

So far, the pair has made 100 stroke rehabilitation kits that have been distributed to St. Joseph's patients.

"It's been very rewarding to be able to start this grassroots initiative and we take pride in the fact it will help stroke patients in their recovery journey," says Varunaavee.

The kits were funded by the Taking it Global youth grant.



Stroke survivor Art Jansen, with the support of his family, completed a mini triathlon organized by his son, which took the 74-year-old one hour and 18 minutes to complete.

TRIUMPHS AND A TRIATHLON

Stroke survivor Art Jansen shares his story of determination and hope to inspire others.

Seventy-four-year-old Art Jansen gazes proudly at a photograph he never expected to see. In the photo, he is standing proudly with his family by his side after completing a triathlon.

Not just any triathlon - but a family-organized event for him to mark his long journey of recovery after suffering a devastating stroke on Nov. 11, 2019.

Art's stroke was due to complications following a heart infection. He experienced weakness in his arms and face while in his home and immediately called 911. After spending a month at London Health Sciences Centre's University Hospital for treatment of his heart condition, Art was transferred to St. Joseph's Health Care

London's Stroke/Neurological Rehabilitation Program at Parkwood Institute where, over the next nine months, he would undergo intensive rehabilitation to regain skills and mobility.

"I knew I had to stay positive and set some goals for myself."

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, strokes are the leading cause of adult disability in the nation and the third leading cause of death. Every year, nearly 14,000 Canadians die from a stroke.

The stroke left Art paralyzed on one side of his body and unable to speak, eat and walk. He assumed he would spend the rest of his days in a long-term care facility.

"It was a very difficult time," recalls Art. "It all happened just as the COVID-19 pandemic began and everything was locked down and uncertain. I would have virtual visits with my family and my daughter would sometimes visit through a closed glass window. I was very isolated."

Despite his condition and a global pandemic unfolding, Art was determined to push forward.

"I knew I had to stay positive and set some goals for myself."

With the help of St. Joseph's stroke rehabilitation team, which included nurses, physicians, speech pathologists and physiotherapists, Art began his journey of recovery. Working daily in the gym on strength and balance, he eventually progressed to short walks outside on the facility grounds. He also regained his speech.

St. Joseph's inpatient stroke rehabilitation program at Parkwood Institute Main Building is designed for individuals who have had a stroke or another neurological condition and would benefit from the expertise of a team to achieve their rehabilitation potential. The length of stay varies and is determined on an individual basis. A variety of approaches are tailored to each patient aimed at improving function and independence.

"The stroke rehabilitation team were determined to help me succeed," says Art.



Stroke survivor Art Jansen, left, stands proudly with his two grandchildren after completing a family held triathlon to celebrate his recovery after suffering from a devastating stroke in 2019.



With the help of the stroke rehabilitation team at St. Joseph's Health Care London's Parkwood Institute, Art Jansen exceeded his own expectations and regained his independence after suffering a devastating stroke in 2019.

And succeed he did. After being discharged as an inpatient in July 2020, Art, an avid skier, swimmer and cyclist prior to his debilitating stroke, began rigorous training with a fitness expert.

In Art's exuberant cheering section were his children and grandchildren, who decided a celebration was in order to mark his progress. On Sept. 6, 2020, they held a mini triathlon - just for him - at his son's place. The triathlon consisted of a 2.2-kilometre walk around the block, a 10-kilometre bike ride using an exercise bike, and 10 laps in his son's backyard pool.

"To have my family's support throughout this journey has meant everything to me," says Art, who has recently moved into his own apartment just a short walk from his son's home.

"You don't realize how important your independence truly is until it's suddenly taken away. A person's goals might look different and that's okay - it doesn't have to be a triathlon. What's important is to stay positive and keep moving forward throughout your recovery. It really does make a difference."



After suffering from a rare neuroimmune disorder, Paul Garret was left paralyzed from the waist down and his life changed forever. He never imagined his recovery journey would lead to an exciting and empowering collaboration with the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program at Parkwood Institute to develop a web-based health care tool designed to enhance care for people with spinal cord injuries.

WHEN LIFE CHANGES IN AN INSTANT

Patients and family caregivers helped design and are testing a web-based tool aimed at improving care for individuals with spinal cord injury.

It started like any other day. Paul Garrett could never have imagined that by the end of the day, he would be paralyzed from the waist down.

On May 25, 2019, Paul was making coffee before another day's work as an appliance installer when he noticed a slight tingling in the toes of his right foot. Being fairly fit and in his early sixties, he didn't think much of it – until the numbness got worse, moving up to the base of his spine and down the other leg. Within 30 minutes of the initial sensation, he lost all feeling and function in his legs.

Paul was rushed to the nearest emergency department. For some reason, he knew his life had changed forever. He assumed he was suffering from a stroke.

“Before the ambulance arrived, it was terrifying and emotional. I had this feeling I would never walk again.”

“They started from scratch with me, nothing was working when I got to Parkwood Institute.”

It wasn't a stroke but Paul was right about the life-altering ramifications. After days of testing, he was diagnosed with acute onset transverse myelitis, a rare neuroimmune disorder where inflammation damages the insulating material (myelin) covering the nerves along the spine. Without this protective coating, signals from the brain to the spine and back cannot occur.

Paul came to St. Joseph's Health Care London's Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Rehabilitation Program at Parkwood Institute, where his care team partnered with him and wife Brenda to develop a recovery plan.

“They started from scratch with me, nothing was working when I got to Parkwood Institute,” says Paul.

When occupational therapist Charlie Giurleo asked Paul and Brenda what their initial goals for rehabilitation were, they were quick to answer. Paul wanted to get to his son's wedding, just a month away. The team, and Paul, got to work, focusing treatments and exercises on learning how to get out of bed, transfer from the wheelchair to the car, and stand independently.

“I made it to the wedding, and I was even able to stand for a few pictures with my family. It was amazing.”

While the physical recovery was a significant hurdle for the Garretts, so was the emotional recovery.

“The SCI Rehabilitation Program team gave us wonderful support and information on how to live with a spinal cord injury,” says Brenda. “There was a lot of grief in the beginning for a life that was profoundly changed and would never be the same again, but we were able to move on and adapt thanks to the team at Parkwood Institute who were so positive and empowering.”

Emboldened by his care team, Paul was able to remain upbeat. Each time he met a new health care provider, he would tell them, ‘You're on Team Paul now,’ as he held up his hand for a fist bump.” With the support of Team Paul, including his wife, a determined Paul can now walk with a walker.

...continued



Paul Garrett is supported by his care provider at St. Joseph's Health Care London's Parkwood Institute where his care is focused on regaining strength, mobility and independence after a rare neuroimmune disorder left him paralyzed.

PARTNERING WITH PATIENTS AND FAMILY CAREGIVERS

As part of their journey at St. Joseph's, the Garretts were asked to partner with the SCI Rehabilitation Program and Lawson Health Research Institute (Lawson) to design and test a new web-based platform for SCI patients and their caregivers called VIP4SCI.

With a goal to improve quality of care and the patient experience, the VIP4SCI platform includes educational resources tailored to SCI patients and their loved ones, self-management tools and trackers, and an interactive hub for two-way communication between the patient and care team.

“This platform is like a bridge that links physical care and emotional care.”

“The VIP4SCI system will help us enhance our partnership with patients and families in care,” explains Charlie. “Patients are empowered to create action plans in the platform and use the education tools to help them manage their condition. Members of their health care team receive alerts when patients set goals so we can provide encouragement and guidance. Each patient is also assigned a ‘VIP coach’ to assist them in their care journey.”

“We are really excited about the possibilities of this project,” adds Lawson researcher Dalton Wolfe. “In our testing phase we are evaluating the usability of the system, while at the same time determining if the data we collect can be used to improve patient care and outcomes.”

Being involved in the design and testing of the VIP4SCI platform was meaningful to both Paul and Brenda. For Paul, VIP4SCI has allowed him to connect with his care team members, exercise virtually, receive messages and

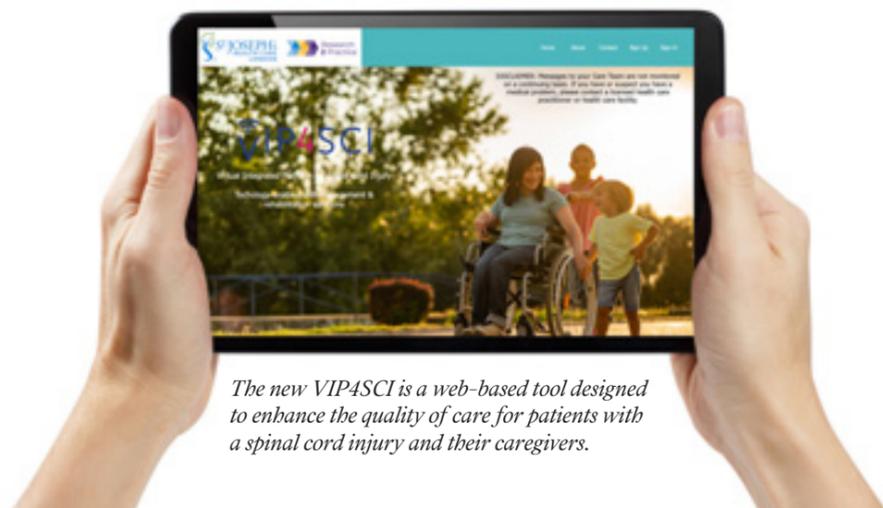
WHAT IS VIP4SCI?

- + VIP4SCI is a new, virtual web based health care tool aimed at transforming the quality of care for patients with spinal cord injury (SCI). The goal is to help patients make decisions about their care, improve their transition from hospital to home, and lessen secondary effects of their SCI.
- + The platform addresses three needs for SCI patients:
 - Easy access to a library of reliable SCI resources to support ongoing education.
 - Enhanced communication with their health care team (inpatients and outpatients) by allowing messaging and video calls between patient and team.
 - Support for self management of their condition using goal setting tools, medication trackers, and tools that allow patients to explore strategies to support ongoing skin health, pain management, physical activity and emotional well being.
- + VIP4SCI was co designed by patients, caregivers and health care providers in partnership with Spinal Cord Injury Ontario and ForaHealthyMe Inc.
- + A six month trial of VIP4SCI is assessing how this platform supports patients and staff, particularly during the COVID 19 pandemic when virtual interventions are quickly becoming a must.
- + VIP4SCI has been made possible by funding from the Craig Neilsen Foundation.

reminders, and access educational resources and links that have helped him make connections in his community. For Brenda, the benefits are equally powerful.

“It was incredible to learn that the team wanted my input as a caregiver, and that they were developing something to improve the emotional well-being of patients and their loved ones.

So often, health care is all about the medicine, the treatments. This platform is like a bridge that links physical care and emotional care. It offers patients a way to stay positive and encourages them to more fully participate in, and navigate, their road to recovery.”



The new VIP4SCI is a web-based tool designed to enhance the quality of care for patients with a spinal cord injury and their caregivers.



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“As the vaccination process will take time, we will continue to need the support of this incredible team to keep us all as safe as possible.”

— TRACY DRENTH,
VOLUNTEER SERVICES
COORDINATOR



Every day, St. Joseph's screeners stand on the front-lines to greet incoming patients and staff. This new role since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic ensures a safe environment for everyone by providing masks, assisting patients with finding their way, and asking if visitors and staff have COVID-19 symptoms.

KEEPING IT SAFE

More than 160 COVID-19 screeners staff entrances across St. Joseph's Health Care London.

Do you have any COVID-19 symptoms? It's a question you will be asked by screeners across St. Joseph's Health Care London upon entering a St. Joseph's facility. This, and other important questions, have been asked so many times by screeners they could quite literally recite them in their sleep. Yet, they show up every day, smiling behind their mask, ready to do everything they can to keep patients, staff and physicians safe from the spiraling pandemic.

WHAT DO SCREENERS DO?

The screener role - a newly created position within St. Joseph's since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic - involves screening everyone who comes through our doors for coronavirus symptoms and other risk factors. The position also includes handing out masks, greeting individuals upon entry, and helping to escort people to different areas of the hospital.

Early on in the pandemic, many staff at St. Joseph's were redeployed to fill this role. They have since returned to their previous positions, leaving the job largely to a group of new, dedicated individuals committed to safety at this unprecedented time.

“Without screeners, greeters and wayfinders in place, the risk of COVID-19 virus coming into the organization or transmission between people would have been exponentially greater,” says Jennifer Payton, Director of Quality, Strategy and Innovation at St. Joseph's.

“Screeners are also incredibly quick to adjust to constant changes in procedures and processes as the pandemic unfolds. We appreciate their astute flexibility and dedication.”

WHO ARE THE SCREENERS?

The responsibility of the screeners comes with both its challenges and opportunities. Tracy Drenth, Volunteer Services Coordinator at St. Joseph's who also orients newly hired screeners, says, “I couldn't be prouder and more thankful for so many wonderful people who have and continue to work with us as part of our screening team. As the vaccination process will take time, we will continue to need the support of this incredible team to keep us all as safe as possible.”

Two dedicated individuals who have eagerly taken on this unique duty are Emily Brewer and Holly Bourdeau. Here, they share their experiences on the frontlines of this historic pandemic:

EMILY BREWER

“One of the unique aspects of my job is screening staff at Parkwood Institute's Main Building, which has a daycare located at the facility. I love watching the little kids come through and putting a smile on their faces. I sometimes give them fun stickers or little individually wrapped treats just to brighten their day.”

“I knew there was a need for screeners when the pandemic began and felt it would be a great opportunity to help out.”

Seeing many of the same staff every day, Emily says she has enjoyed getting to know them and contributing to their safety during the pandemic.

“I have volunteered in health care before as a student porter and was familiar with working in a health care setting. I knew there was a need for screeners when the pandemic began and felt it would be a great opportunity to help out.”



Emily Brewer, a 22-year-old student at Western University, worked as a screener for more than a year at St. Joseph's Parkwood Institute's Main Building. She has recently transitioned to a new part-time role in St. Joseph's Veterans Care Program.

“It started as a summer job, but I have since continued on a part-time basis. I've formed many friendships with my co-workers, which is one of many reasons I am excited to come to work every day. But it's also important to remind people about the main reason so many of us are here - because we care about everyone's safety and want to do our part to help.”

HOLLY BOURDEAU

“One of the biggest challenges was adapting to being the first point of contact for patients, family and staff during a time when emotions are running high. Patients often can't be accompanied by a family member or loved one unless they are deemed essential. This can create a bit of anxiety and sometimes tears - so my role is to make them feel as comfortable as possible and ensure they know where to go in the hospital for their appointment.”

A self-described people person and a previous business owner, Holly is used to working with others, but she finds the screener role particularly gratifying.

“I feel good knowing I have given a patient who enters our site a warm smile and understanding when I know many of them have a lot on their minds. Even just simply riding the elevator with a patient after they have been screened to help them get to their appointment or put them at ease makes a big difference in someone's experience.”



Holly Bourdeau, a screener, greeter and 'wayfinder' at St. Joseph's Hospital says the ever-changing role has taught her to be adaptable, resilient and “just ready to take on anything, which is somewhat like COVID-19 itself.”



Every year, recipients of the Diabetes Half Century Awards, presented by St. Joseph's Health Care London, receive a special medal designed by diabetes patient James Telfer. Recently, James received the medal he designed having reached 50 years of living with diabetes. The medal is funded by industry partner Sanofi Canada.

DESIGNING HIS FUTURE

Since age 12, James Telfer knew what it would take to live well with diabetes. Recently, the 61-year-old London artist received a medal of his own design given to St. Joseph's Health Care London patients who reach 50 years living with insulin-dependent diabetes.

When James Telfer was asked several years ago by his endocrinologist at St. Joseph's Hospital for a loan of his creative design talents, he was happy to oblige. The request was for a special medal to be presented each year to patients with insulin-dependent diabetes who reach 50 years since their diagnosis.

As a long-time diabetes patient himself, James, a London design artist, understood how momentous it would be to reach half a century

living with the condition, and how meaningful the medal would be to patients reaching the milestone.

James designed the medal, at the centre of which is the Flame of Hope – an eternal flame that honours Sir Frederick Banting's discovery of insulin. The medal has since been given out annually at St. Joseph's Diabetes Half Century Awards.

In the fall, James was on the receiving end of the medal he crafted. He is among nine recipients of the 2020 Diabetes Half Century Awards having reached the 50-year mark of living well with diabetes. Presented by St. Joseph's, the awards honour individuals for their personal commitment and diligence in looking after their health, and for acting as a role model to all those living with diabetes.

“Perseverance, planning and control – that was the way to go. It was drilled into me from the beginning.”

James, 61, was 12 when he was diagnosed. Immediately, his mother laid down the law and set the tone for how he would live the rest of his life. He was taught how to look after himself and what it would take to ensure a long, fulfilling future. As a result, he never felt limited in what he could do.

“Perseverance, planning and control – that was the way to go. It was drilled into me from the beginning.”

Summers at a camp for children with diabetes, where James would go on to become a counsellor, were also instrumental in shaping his approach to life with diabetes. A “mystical” place that not only immersed him in wilderness adventures, camp was also where



Novo Nordisk provides each Diabetes Half Century Award recipient with a framed print of London's Banting House.

“there was no bellyaching” about having diabetes and where he learned that knowledge was power when it came to managing his condition.

James would go on to become a design artist with a penchant for interior, event, industrial and jewelry design, an entrepreneur, and a fearless traveller to far-flung corners of the globe where he collects works of art for his London home décor store, called Splash. He equates being a successful artist to being successful at managing diabetes.

“To do what I do you have to be awake and aware all the time. It's the same with diabetes.”

As a patient of Dr. Irene Hramiak since the early 1980s, James has participated in several key diabetes trials over the years that have helped to define care for people with type 1 diabetes. When asked to design the Diabetes Half Century Award medal, he was excited. “It was something else I could contribute.”

To earn the medal himself this year means James too is officially a role model for others. And that, he says, “is a very cool thing.”



On behalf of Eli Lilly Canada, the Lilly Diabetes Journey Award recognizing long lives lived with diabetes is provided to each recipient of St. Joseph's Diabetes Half Century Awards.

CELEBRATING DIABETES WARRIORS

Over the past 17 years, nearly 170 patients have received St. Joseph's Diabetes Half Century Awards, which is presented every year during Diabetes Awareness Month in November. Patients with insulin dependent diabetes who reach 50 years since their diagnosis are nominated by their endocrinologist. These individuals are an inspiration to others living with the condition and symbolize what can be achieved with perseverance, good management, and advances in care and education.

A LIFESAVING FINDING

St. Joseph's Health Care London patient Barbara Moscovich is telling the world about the discovery of a tiny dot with big implications for women with dense breasts.

It was startlingly clear – a tiny bright dot stood out starkly on the grey image. Unseen on every other exam, something was definitely there.

It was a lifesaving finding for Barbara Moscovich – a tumour pinpointed using contrast-enhanced mammography at St. Joseph's Hospital where women are benefitting from the latest in breast imaging technology.



If it wasn't for contrast-enhanced mammography at St. Joseph's Hospital in London, Barbara Moscovich's breast cancer story would have a very different ending. The experience has made her an advocate for better screening for women with dense breasts.

Barbara, 75, has faithfully undergone regular breast screening for more than three decades. Three years ago, due to extremely dense breasts, it was advised she have a mammogram every year instead of every two years. It wasn't enough to catch a good-sized lump on her left breast, which was discovered last year during a physical exam by her family doctor. During the follow up with mammography and ultrasound on both breasts, the lump in the left breast was visible on ultrasound, but barely seen on her mammogram. There was also a hint of something suspicious on the right that was eluding detection.

"The radiologist couldn't really see it on the ultrasound so suggested contrast-enhanced mammography," says Barbara. "Sure enough, a very very tiny tumour showed up just under the nipple, which was why it was hard to locate. The images were amazing, so clear despite my very 'busy' breasts."

Both lumps were cancerous and Barbara underwent a lumpectomy on each breast on Dec. 27, 2019, followed by partial breast radiation. She will be on an anti-estrogen hormone medication for the next seven years and monitored closely.

"I feel so lucky to have benefitted from contrast-enhanced mammography. Had it not been available, that second tumour wouldn't have been detected until it was much bigger. I have tremendous peace of mind knowing this technology is available at St. Joseph's as part of my follow up."

Barbara's story has been shared worldwide through a docuseries by GE Healthcare, maker of the Senographe Pristina mammography machine, a groundbreaking new breast imaging platform. In 2017, St. Joseph's became the first hospital in Canada to install a Pristina unit.

The following year, additional Pristina units were installed with the added capability of performing contrast-enhanced mammograms and tomosynthesis (three-dimensional mammography). In June 2020, St. Joseph's became the first hospital in North America to perform a biopsy guided by contrast-enhanced mammography.

Contrast-enhanced mammography combines conventional digital diagnostic mammography with the administration of a contrast agent, explains Dr. Anat Kornecki, Breast Radiology Lead with St. Joseph's Breast Care Program. The contrast agent – radiographic dye containing iodine – is injected into a vein in the patient's arm before the mammogram images are taken.

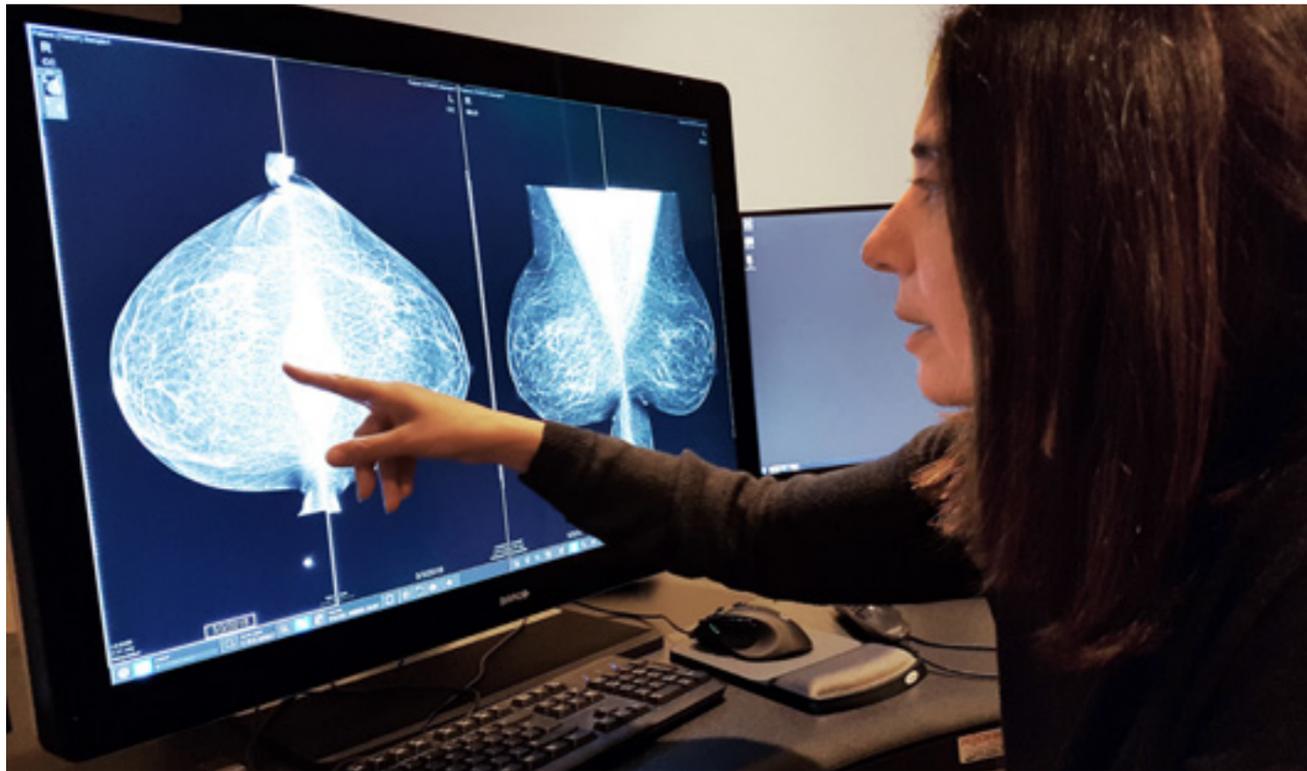
With contrast-enhanced mammography, the area of concern within the breast is highlighted in much more detail and can be an alternative to MRI, says Dr. Kornecki. It can pinpoint cancers that can't be seen with standard mammography and is particularly effective in assessing dense breasts. Those considered for contrast mammography are patients who have had a screening mammogram that indicated something suspicious, or those who present with breast symptoms. At this time, it is not used for regular screening.

...continued



Patients of the Breast Care Program at St. Joseph's Hospital are benefitting from the latest in breast imaging technology that is making a significant difference in precision and confidence in diagnosing or ruling out breast cancer.





Dr. Anat Kornecki, Breast Radiology Lead with St. Joseph's Health Care London's Breast Care Program, calls contrast-enhanced mammography "a game changer" in breast imaging and the detection of breast cancer.



Dr. Anat Kornecki, Breast Radiology Lead with St. Joseph's Health Care London's Breast Care Program.

"After three years of using contrast-enhanced mammography I can say that this is a game changer in the world of breast imaging," says Dr. Kornecki. "Similar to MRI, it can detect many more cancers than standard mammography and ultrasound and, at the same time, it allows us to reach a final diagnosis and provide treatment more rapidly."

Now an advocate for better screening for women with dense breasts, Barbara says many women are unaware that dense breasts not only make it harder for radiologists to spot tumours, the actual risk of cancer for those with dense breasts is higher.

"The denser the breast, the higher the risk of getting breast cancer," says Barbara, who is active with Dense Breasts Canada.

More than 40 per cent of woman have dense breasts, many without knowing it, says Barbara. Dense breasts are considered those with more than 50 per cent dense tissue. While Barbara knew she had dense breasts, she wasn't aware of the extent – she is at 75 per cent -until

it was recommended she get mammograms yearly. The information is available on the mammogram reports sent to family doctors.

"It should be flagged by family doctors, women informed and information available," says Barbara, a retired teacher and principal. "I had to find out a whole lot of information on my own. My advice is for women to ask the question – 'How dense are my breasts?'"

As a patient of St. Joseph's Breast Care Program, adds the lifelong learner, "I couldn't have been in a better place to benefit from the latest and best in breast imaging."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Community support is advancing diagnostic imaging to help save the lives of people like Barbara. Thanks to generous donations through the St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation, breast care imaging equipment like the Pristina mammography machine, ultra sound machines and leading edge 3T MRI are now available to help women in our community.

LIGHTING THE WAY TO BETTER HEART CARE

Lawson Health Research Institute was the first in Canada to install a confocal microscope now being used at St. Joseph's Health Care London to explore early predictors for heart failure.

The heart is one of the hardest working organs in the body, pumping vital oxygen and nutrients through the blood to keep the body's system in good functioning order.

When the heart becomes damaged or weakened by other conditions – a syndrome called heart failure – a person can be left breathless, perpetually fatigued and at risk for serious health issues. It can lead to long hospital stays, ongoing hospital readmissions and, in certain cases, can be life-threatening.

"One of the biggest problems with heart failure is that it's nearly impossible to predict who will develop it," says scientist Savita Dhanvantari (PhD) at Lawson Health Research Institute (Lawson).

Dhanvantari, along with her team of researchers, is using a leading-edge confocal microscope to explore – at a cellular level – an early biological marker (a warning sign of disease progression) for heart failure so that patients can be diagnosed well before symptoms appear.

The confocal microscope is no ordinary microscope. Lawson was the first in Canada to install this advanced and important instrument, which was made possible through donations to St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation. It is now one of four in the region being used to observe and study disease development and progression. It is also being trialed to support discovery of new drug and medical treatments.

This work complements whole-body imaging that is done in conjunction with St. Joseph's Nordan Cyclotron and PET Radiochemistry Facility, in which radioisotopes produced onsite are used to view in 3D what's happening inside the body in real time.



In the case of Dhanvantari's heart failure research, the team is using a fluorescent-tagged molecule called Cy5-ghrelin for confocal microscopy and a radioisotope called Fluorine-18 Ghrelin for whole-heart imaging. This imaging research is a breakthrough indicator for early detection to assist physicians and patients.

While the research is still in an experimental phase, Dhanvantari is excited about this discovery and sees its potential to improve care outcomes for patients who have experienced one or more heart events.

"Heart failure is extremely debilitating," explains Dhanvantari. "Our goal is to be able to predict heart failure early on so that a patient can take proactive steps through medication and lifestyle changes to halt its progression."



Savita Dhanvantari (PhD), scientist at Lawson Health Research Institute, stands next to the state-of-the-art confocal microscope – the first to be installed in Canada.



State-of-the-art technology like the confocal microscope is shaping the future of health care in our community. Such technology is made possible with your support. By donating to St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation, you help invest in game-changing equipment that bridges the gap between good and great care. Learn more by visiting:

sjhc.london.on.ca/foundation



THE RIGHT KIND OF TREATMENT

After living with treatment resistant depression for years, Lori Linton is feeling rejuvenated thanks to innovations in mental health care.

Two years ago, Lori Linton felt she was running out of options. Struggling with a number of heartbreaking difficulties, her situation wasn't improving. She was grieving the loss of her spouse and dealing with troubling family issues. She was also recovering from several health problems, including a heart attack and Hodgkin's lymphoma – a type of cancer. Mentally and emotionally, Lori's burdens were crippling.

Lori's physician prescribed a number of different medications to address her mental health, but little changed. To make matters worse, the negative side effects of the medications were starting to take a toll. She was dealing with what physicians call treatment resistant depression (TRD), which is when patients don't respond to any kind of treatment – even after many years of multiple therapies.

Referred to St. Joseph's Health Care London's Parkwood Institute Mental Health Care Building, Lori was able to benefit from a new TRD assessment model and physicians determined she was a perfect candidate for transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). TMS is a non-invasive procedure that uses electric stimulation to regulate neural activity in the brain. Lori began treatment right away and within weeks she felt rejuvenated.

"By the third week, I felt great. I could have finished then and I would have been happy. By the time the treatment was done, I was so much better. I felt as good as I did when I was younger."

Dr. Viraj Mehta, a psychiatrist and Site Chief of St. Joseph's Mental Health Care Program, estimates that about 10 per cent of individuals with depression do not respond

to traditional therapies and medications, and about 30 per cent only partially respond. It's crucial to gather a holistic view of each patient's unique condition using specially designed questionnaires, as well as physical and cognitive assessments. Having a comprehensive assessment and access to the right kind of treatment is what made the difference for Lori. The cloud of depression she had been living with for years lifted in just a few weeks.

"The tools are here - they just need to be matched to the right person at the right time."

— DR. VIRAJ MEHTA,
PSYCHIATRIST AND SITE CHIEF
OF ST. JOSEPH'S MENTAL
HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

The true test came a few months after Lori finished treatment, when she experienced yet another family crisis. While it was stressful to deal with, she was able to do so without the darkness of her depression returning. Today, even during these uncertain times of the pandemic, Lori is in good health and able to make every day count.



Lori Linton was relieved to find the right kind of treatment for depression at St. Joseph's Health Care London.



Paddling the river, Lori Linton is enjoying life again after receiving care for treatment resistant depression at St. Joseph's Mental Health Care Program.



YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT TODAY

Donor funding is needed to enhance research into treatment resistant depression (TRD) and care for patients struggling with this debilitating mental health issue.

If you would like to learn more about work underway at St. Joseph's Health Care London's Parkwood Institute, visit

www.sjhc.london.on.ca/fundraising-priorities/streamlining-care-treatment-resistant-depression

TRANSFORMATIVE DONOR SUPPORT

The transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) machine that transformed Lori Linton's life was fully funded through donations to St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation. It's an example of how donor dollars help improve and even save lives by investing in health care innovation and discovery that would otherwise not be possible.

A team of physicians and psychiatrists at St. Joseph's Parkwood Institute led by psychiatrist Dr. Viraj Mehta is transforming how treatment resistant depression (TRD) is diagnosed with the goal of ensuring patients receive the best possible care and recover faster. St. Joseph's offers several treatments for TRD including medication, talk therapy, electroconvulsive therapy and TMS.

"The tools are here - they just need to be matched to the right person at the right time," says Dr. Mehta.

With this new approach, St. Joseph's could become the first specialized facility in Canada to comprehensively assess and measure TRD, allowing the team of mental health specialists to expand research and treatments that make recovery achievable for people living with TRD.

my ST. JOSEPH'S

St. Joseph's Health Care London provides care through a unique mix of clinical settings - making us one of the most complex health care organizations in Ontario. In a continual effort to bring the best care possible to those we serve, we constantly engage patients and their families, leaders, physicians, staff, volunteers, donors and many partners to ensure St. Joseph's takes innovative steps in addressing the health care needs of our community, now and in the future.

MY ST. JOSEPH'S IS

St. Joseph's Hospital

Parkwood Institute

Mount Hope
Centre for
Long Term Care

Southwest Centre
for Forensic
Mental Health Care

Teams, clinics and programs in our
community and beyond.

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK OR STORY WITH US

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