

THE BULLETIN

HGH FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2022



A COMMUNITY BEHIND OUR HOSPITAL AND ITS STAFF!

Words of appreciation and encouragement on behalf of the HGH Foundation and its community of grateful donors

by *Erin Tabakman, Executive Director*

In December, for the second time since the start of the pandemic, my colleagues at the HGH Foundation and I closed our office at HGH and started working from home. Although this was less than ideal, and I truly missed meeting donors in person, it pales in comparison to the challenges physicians and staff at HGH have been living through. They are on my mind so often, as are the patients and families directly impacted by reduced visits and delayed procedures at HGH due to COVID-19.

The circumstances are difficult for everyone and your continued support for our hospital and its staff during this time has made a difference, as you will see in my interview with HGH's Chief of Staff, Dr. Julie Maranda.

Dr. Maranda mentions how profoundly touched she and her colleagues have been by your generous donations, kind comments, and deep appreciation of our healthcare professionals. You truly are a mighty army of supporters who stand behind our wonderful hospital and its amazing

staff. You are directly impacting patient care at HGH, not only in these moments, but long after they are behind us. We thank you.

Like many of you, I am continuously amazed and inspired by the resilience and strength of HGH's physicians and staff, in all departments. The Foundation functions as the link between the community and its hospital, so after being the fortunate recipient of your words of support for the HGH team, I felt it only fitting to express our collective gratitude to the friendly faces I see in the halls of our hospital every day.

To each and every member of the HGH team: Please know that your community is so very grateful. We see the incredible effort you have made to care for us, and those we love, and we stand behind you in awe and appreciation. You have provided care to many donors during what are often the most stressful moments in their lives, and they are sending you their warm words of encouragement and strength – as do all of us at the Foundation. Thank you for being here for us.



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH HGH'S CHIEF OF STAFF

Dr. Julie Maranda shares an inside look at the impact of COVID-19 at HGH and how the hospital is supporting its physicians and staff.

Dr. Maranda, you're a physician and Chief of Staff of a hospital during a worldwide pandemic! First of all, how are you doing?

The bottom line is I'm doing fine. I think until you're challenged like this, you have no idea how resilient you can be, and this pandemic is certainly testing our limits! It's incredibly motivating to see how everyone at HGH is chipping in and hanging on. Honestly, every single health professional that works in this organization has gone above and beyond, and continues to do so. It really is heartwarming to see how much people care about the hospital and its patients.

How has the Omicron variant and this most recent wave of the pandemic impacted HGH and its staff?

It's almost like we're back into wave one, because there are a lot of unknowns. Omicron is extremely contagious, and the numbers have ramped up similar to wave one in terms of case count and hospitalization rates. On one hand, it's discouraging to feel a bit like Groundhog Day (laugh), but on the other hand, we're seeing some hope, because it seems to be a much less severe illness, at least for people who are vaccinated.

We're starting to see how we will be able to live with COVID, as opposed to eliminating it and that means a lot of changes for a hospital. We must consider the impact on patient movement, transfer protocols, patient location within the hospital, and of course, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). It's a whole new world!

The other thing that's made this wave particularly difficult is that prior to this we were fairly comfortably staffed. There were vacancies, but they were manageable. In this wave, similar to all the other hospitals, we have an incredible amount of sick leave, but we also have vacant positions from retirements, departures, etc. We're in a war with less soldiers and that's made it extra hard.

What are you proudest of in respect of HGH's reaction to this challenging time?

HGH has always put patient care as its number one priority. Decisions that may or may not involve finances; that may or may not involve movement of personnel within the hospital; the underlying motivation for all decisions is what is best for



the patient. I'm proud of that because it's not everywhere that you see that level of conscientiousness.

I've noticed that HGH has really tried to care for its physicians and staff during this time too.

That's right. Although patients are our number one priority, our number one and a half priority is the wellness of our employees. We know we can't take care of patients without ensuring the well-being of our physicians and staff. You know, you can't drive a car whose fuel tank is empty! So, we need to make sure our employees are well taken care of and that they feel supported, safe and valued.

Very early on in the pandemic, we developed strategies to support wellness and to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on our employees. We want to try to get us through this as well as possible, knowing that there is an anticipated post-pandemic wave of exhaustion and of emotional trauma, even. HGH has kept that top of mind and every committee that meets has some aspect of wellness in their thinking and in their conversation. On top of that, there is a specific Employee Wellness Committee. We've put in extra resources for psychological support with the help of our mental health team, we've brought in wellness ambassadors that are roaming the halls to listen empathetically to our employees and hear their concerns. We have wellness carts, which are placed in the departments to give employees snacks and little gifts to bring home for their families, as well as a reminder of the resources available to them. The leadership team does rounding through the departments to engage with the employees and hear their concerns and take feedback and suggestions back to the executive so we can implement them. Wellness is at the top of our agenda in everything we do right now.

Can you think of a particular moment that exemplifies our physician and staff's resilience?

Just before the New Year, we were on the verge of having to drastically reduce the hours of HGH's Emergency Department (ED). We had shifts where there were very few nurses. But, the team came together through that crisis to prevent the closure of the ED. It was medical and nursing staff, but also patient care aides, clerks, housekeeping staff and security guards. It was about everyone coming together to make sure the ED could stay open and provide care for our community.

HGH Foundation donors have contributed more than \$145,000 to help fight COVID-19 at HGH, not to mention their many kind words of support for HGH's physicians and staff. How does it feel knowing you have a whole community of grateful supporters behind you?

It's truly touching. Though the patients are often the focus of our discussions, we can't forget their families, we can't forget the community, and the fact that they may not be patients today, but they may be patients at some point in the future. So, getting these reminders, this ongoing support from all of you, ensures that the community remains at the forefront of our mind as we make difficult decisions. It's so appreciated. I know from personal experience that an email with a congratulations or thank you truly makes your day. It really does! You read that one email and you just take a deep breath and you feel like, ok, I can keep going. And, I'm not the only one who feels that way. Everyone else makes the same comment. You just float through the rest of your day knowing that you're not alone and that we're all in this together.

It's also so comforting to know that members of the community are out there doing their best to stay healthy and reduce the impact of the pandemic. You're making my job a little bit easier and every little bit counts.

Finally, although the pandemic may have slowed things down, HGH is growing and expanding to better serve the needs of the community. That vision remains and we are intent on continuing along that path as soon as we can. In that respect, donor support makes all the difference by providing funding for equipment we wouldn't otherwise be able to purchase. Like our amazing new MRI and CT scanner! We are so grateful to you all for your support during this difficult time, and also for your generous contributions which are helping us provide better care for our patients closer to home. Thank you on behalf of the entire HGH team.



Housekeeping team during a wellness huddle

EARLIER DIAGNOSIS = BETTER OUTCOMES FOR PATIENTS

With your help, HGH will expand its endoscopy program to double the amount of patients it sees annually, cutting wait lists drastically for this important diagnostic service

Developed and improved over the course of the past 50 years, endoscopy is a type of medical exam using an endoscope with a fiber optic camera, which is passed into an area of the body. Endoscopy can detect polyps, cancer, blockages, abnormal tissue and disease that other tests cannot identify. Relatively painless, this procedure can show details that may not be detected otherwise.

The high volume of patients waiting for tests is a challenge at the moment at HGH. They have been at full capacity with the equipment they currently have available. But, like other programs, the hospital has the space ready for a second endoscopy suite, just not the equipment to support expansion of the program. Outfitting this suite will mean that local patients benefit by receiving these tests sooner and right at their own hospital.

The endoscopy program at HGH manages some 2,500 cases per year and is available 24 hours per day, as it is often required in the Emergency Department.

There are currently long wait lists for endoscopic procedures, but with expansion of the program, HGH could double its capacity to 5,000 cases per year.

Dr. Yvan Leblanc, Chief of Surgery at HGH, and a donor himself, says, *“Anything we can do to shorten wait times will directly impact our patients’ health and outcomes. No one wants to have to wait for treatment and we don’t want to see our patients’ care delayed for this reason. Our community can have a direct impact on this improvement and that is why my family and I continue to support the HGH Foundation.”*



Your gift can help make sure that we are there for everyone, at any time. Expanding endoscopy services at HGH is just one of the priorities in the HGH Foundation’s current campaign, *There’s No Place Like Home*. Please consider making a donation to bring additional and expanded services to your regional hospital.

Please support the HGH Foundation by returning this form with your tax deductible gift in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Your gift will be used to fund our entire mission. Thank you for your support!



YES! I would like to make a donation to the HGH Foundation.

Here is my gift of \$ _____

You will find enclosed my cheque payable to HGH Foundation. **OR** Please charge to my account: VISA MASTERCARD AMERICAN EXPRESS

_____ Expiration date _____ / _____

Name of donor : _____

Address : _____

Phone : _____ Email : _____

Signature : _____

- Please send me information about leaving a gift in my Will
- Please contact me to arrange an automatic monthly gift
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