

Headwaters Health Care Centre kicks off Welcome Centre project

Written By MIKE BAKER

Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) is moving ahead with an ambitious new renovation project that senior staff say will completely revitalize the facility's main foyer.

In a recent release to media, HHCC spokesperson Jennifer Hamilton confirmed the contract for the design portion of the hospital's Welcome Centre Program renovation had been awarded to local firm Dickinson and Hicks Architects Inc. Manor and Croft Design have been retained to provide interior design expertise for the project.

The renovations are part of an ongoing initiative at HHCC to breath fresh life into a facility that recently celebrated its 22nd birthday. The central feature of the project is the renovation of the hospital's main lobby, which will include the installation of self-service registration kiosks, new and improved waiting areas and refurbished cafeteria and gift shop.

“Renovating the main hospital lobby will address safety and accessibility concerns, improve patient care and experience, provide areas of respite, provide a modern gift shop and café, reignite pride in our facility and incorporate the use of new technologies. It will be a modern, comfortable, fully accessible and engaging space that promotes high quality, compassionate care,” Ms. Hamilton stated in the release.

Also featured in the Welcome Centre Program will be the construction of a new main hospital staircase, renovating the hospital entrance and adjacent patio and the centralization of registration, admitting and appointment booking at the facility.

“Feedback from recent community consultation showed us the time is right to tackle this work,” said Stacey Daub, President and CEO of HHCC. “This is another significant milestone as we move toward renovating key areas of our hospital that will help us achieve our vision of an accessible, safe and welcoming design.”

The inspiration for carrying out the renovations, Ms. Hamilton states, is the increased usage of the hospital from the local community. She notes “the hospital is seeing a larger number of patients overall” today, with staff registering up to 300 people daily for different appointments and procedures.

On top of that, the hospital's Emergency Department records over 42,000 visits each year. After recently expanding its services in surgery and ambulatory care, through the opening of the new \$14 million, 8,700 sq. ft. ambulatory services wing, HHCC staff has set its sights on renovating Headwaters' Emergency Department in the near future. A proposal is currently awaiting Ministry of Health approval.

While the Ministry must approve the project, they won't necessarily pay for it. Operating funds provided to HHCC from the Ontario government are not generally used for hospital renovations. This is where the Headwaters Health Care Foundation, and Headwaters Health Care Auxiliary, step in. Last year, the Foundation raised more than \$2 million for equipment and upgrades at the hospital.

Costs associated with the proposed renovations to be carried out under the Welcome Centre Program have not yet been made public. It is expected, once the design work is complete, that senior staff will sit down and discuss next steps and finalize a proposal before putting the project out to tender.

HHCC will host its Annual General Meeting at the Mel Lloyd Auditorium in Shelburne on Tuesday, June 18 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. There, it is expected that Ms. Daub will unveil the organizations new strategic plan ? a document more than two years in the making.

For more information on Headwaters Health Care Centre, visit headwatershealth.ca.