

Osler is taking diabetes prevention across borders

Sun Life Financial Inc. has announced a \$300,000 commitment to the William Osler Health System Foundation to launch the Sun Life Financial Osler Global Health Program and the Sun Life Financial At Risk Diabetes Clinic at Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health in Brampton.

These unique initiatives will support diabetes screening, treatment and collaborative research to benefit patients in high-risk populations such as Punjab, India and surrounding communities of the Greater Toronto Area.

"We're committed to working with Osler to provide enhanced access to diabetes prevention and care initiatives through the Global Health Program and At Risk Clinic," said Lisa Ritchie, senior vice-president and chief marketing officer at Sun Life Financial. "At Sun Life, we understand the value in collaborating with local health care organizations to improve access to care; exchange knowledge and skills; and find innovative ways to improve services at home and abroad."

According to the World Health Organization, diabetes prevalence in India is among the top three highest in the world and the region served by Osler has one of the highest incidences of diabetes in Ontario. The Global Health Program will significantly improve diabetes care in the GTA and Punjab, with the biggest impact in India coming through increased access to diabetes education and care for rural villagers through diabetes medical camps. The Global Health Program will also engage nursing students as a way to educate the next generation of health care professionals in Punjab on how to prevent, diagnose and treat diabetes. Closer to home, the impact will be felt through comparative research opportunities into diabetes and other chronic diseases.

"We recognize that diabetes is a huge concern in the region we serve, as well as in India where so many of our patients and their families are from," Osler Foundation President and CEO Ken Mayhew said. "We are grateful to Sun Life Financial for their support of both programs. This new partnership will provide improved access to diabetes care that is urgently needed and help fill a gap and reduce the prevalence and severity of the disease."

Sun Life Financial and Osler Foundation also announced the creation of the At Risk Diabetes Clinic at Osler. Opening in the spring or summer, the clinic will help identify and provide support to individuals at risk of developing or those who have already been diagnosed with prediabetes. Without intervention, prediabetes is likely to develop into type 2 diabetes within 10 years or less.

However, with the proper support and access to education and resources, the progression from prediabetes to type 2 diabetes can be stopped. The At Risk Diabetes Clinic will offer dedicated fitness, education and dietary/nutritional support to people and their family members at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, including children between the ages of six and 18.

Sun Life Financial takes a holistic approach to supporting the well-being of clients, employees and communities around the world. Since announcing diabetes as our key business and community giving priority across our global footprint, Sun Life Financial has committed more than \$17 million to the cause.