

## **Media Release**

For Immediate Release

# ***Palliative care ‘bigger and better’ as CMH moves to expand service***

Cambridge, ON (November 26, 2009) – Cambridge Memorial Hospital is looking to enhance its oncology and palliative service beginning in early 2010, hospital and medical officials confirmed tonight after approval of the CMH Hospital Improvement Plan by the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network.

As part of a new model of care, CMH is proposing to expand its capability to serve all palliative care patients in a single 21-bed inpatient unit, according to Oncologist Dr. Edmond Chouinard. Currently, the 11-bed inpatient oncology unit is land-locked on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor and can't accommodate the growing need for care. As a result, says Dr. Chouinard, palliative care patients are cared for across three separate nursing units at Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

“The proposed, enhanced oncology/palliative service will move to a new location and will be more responsive to the changing needs for care at CMH,” says Dr. Chouinard. “We will be able to accommodate all palliative care patients, not limited to cancer patients.”

Dr. Chouinard commends the medical leadership of Oncology Associate Dr. Nori Frape for proposing the new approach to integrate acute care with post-acute care services.

Colleague Dr. Louise Sims is hopeful that this new model will provide a more seamless transition from acute to sub-acute to chronic care.

Dr. Chouinard says by moving to one unit, patients throughout their progression of care will benefit from the unique expertise of the entire multidisciplinary team – oncology associates, registered nurses (RNs), registered practical nurses (RPNs), pharmacists, social workers, dieticians and pastoral care, as well as physiotherapists and occupational therapists specially trained in this area.

“All the nursing expertise – RNs certified by the Canadian Nurses’ Association in oncology and palliative care and RPNs with specialized education and training in oncology/palliative care – will be in one area,” says Dr. Chouinard. “This is about providing exceptional care for our patients.”

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As part of the transition to a new, expanded role, Dr. Janet Sproat will be part of a team to establish a program to care for longer-term, ventilated patients now admitted in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit. With capital investments in the oncology/palliative program to care for these chronic-ventilated patients, the hospital will free up ICU capacity for acutely ill patients.

As for the innovative model of cancer care currently provided at the outpatient Medical Day Clinic, Dr. Chouinard says there are no changes planned for those cancer patients who do not require hospitalization. Located on the main floor of the Ambulatory Care Centre, this clinic provides diagnostic consultations and treatment including chemotherapy and supportive and follow-up care.

"The proposed change to the oncology/palliative service at Cambridge Memorial Hospital is good news for the community," says Dr. Chouinard. "A highly regarded service is being preserved and on its way to becoming bigger and better!"

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*An Affiliated Teaching Site of McMaster University School of Medicine, Cambridge Memorial Hospital is a recognized RNAO Best Practice Spotlight Organization serving the communities of Cambridge, North Dumfries, Doon and Deer Ridge. With 155 acute care beds, 1,300 dedicated and skilled employees, and 400 volunteers, our vital statistics for 2008-2009 include: 88,866 diagnostic procedures; 73,165 outpatient visits; 46,079 emergency department visits; 12,185 surgical cases; 3,044 breast screenings; 1,476 births; 1,328 cataract surgeries; and 395 hip/knee replacements.*

*For further information, please contact:*

**Alan Clay**

*Manager, Public Affairs & Communications*

Cambridge Memorial Hospital

700 Coronation Blvd. | Cambridge ON | N1R 3G2

phone: 519-621-2333 ext 2483

mobile: 519-654-8334

fax: 519-740-4938

e-mail [aclay@cmh.org](mailto:aclay@cmh.org)

website: [www.cmh.org](http://www.cmh.org)

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