

# *President's report*

Chuck Connor

# President's report

## **The Gabriola Community Health Centre**

- In 2006 - A vision for better health care on Gabriola began to emerge as residents looked for ways to overcome the lack of health care facilities and services as well as a means to attract and retain doctors on the island.
- In 2008 - Residents gave the Gabriola Health Care Foundation (“GHCF”) a mandate to develop a community owned urgent treatment facility and a primary care medical clinic and to promote primary health care services on the island.
- In 2012 - With incredible determination, fundraising and volunteering, the community completed construction and opened the doors to the Gabriola Community Health Centre.
- Today the Health Centre is in full operation, debt free, and provides the community with a well-equipped urgent treatment facility together with a very effective model of team based primary health care offering a broad range of primary health care services.

# President's report

## **The Gabriola Health Care Foundation**

Currently the GHCF serves a number of important roles including:

- Supporting and participating in the recruitment and retention of physicians.
- Collaborating with the Health Authority and others to bring appropriate health services and programs to Gabriola.
- On behalf of the community, assuming the responsibility as owner and landlord of the Health Centre for all administration, maintenance, tenant relations as well as financial management and long-term capital planning for the facility itself.

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## **The Urgent Treatment Facility (the “UTF”)**

- The UTF contains the specialized medical equipment and supplies necessary to treat patients requiring urgent medical care.
- The Clinic doctors respond to nearly 1,300 emergency cases annually.
- Typically 90% of those patients are successfully treated in the UTF and are able to return directly home, eliminating many trips to Nanaimo and reducing the case load on the busy Nanaimo hospital emergency room.
- Patients with the most serious conditions are stabilized in the UTF and transferred by ambulance or helicopter to hospital emergency rooms in Nanaimo, Victoria or Vancouver for further treatment.
- Island Health's Home Care Nurses treat well over 1,000 patients annually in the UTF thereby providing greater efficiencies in nursing services.
- A plastic and reconstructive surgeon, a general surgeon and a cardiologist all see patients in the UTF on visits to Gabriola.

# **GH** President's report

## **The health care providers**

All medical services and treatment of patients is provided by the various health care providers, each of whom lease space within the health centre and employ their own health care professionals, staff and administration.

- **Gabriola Medical Clinic**

- Doctors Thorne, Cusack, Green, Neilson and Nurse Practitioner Lewis lease space in the Health Centre and operate their busy family practice as well as treating patients requiring emergency care in the UTF.
- The doctors work in close collaboration with various health care professionals from Island Health, all of whom treat patients within the Health Centre. This provides an excellent level of interdisciplinary team-based care for patients.

- **Life Labs** – Provides medical laboratory services 5 days a week.

- **Gabriola Dental** - Operate a state of the art dental and oral hygiene clinic.

- **Claire MacDonald, RMT** - Provides massage therapy services.

# **GH** President's report

## **The health care providers (continued)**

- **The Island Health Authority**

- Island Health leases space in the Health Centre, including a portion of the UTF as well as the Telehealth, Nurses and Mental Health Rooms.
- The Home Care nurses treat many of their patients in the UTF.
- A psychiatrist sees patients on visits to the Health Centre or via Telehealth services available in the Clinic.
- A mental health and addictions nurse sees many patients in the Health Centre
- A social worker and mental health clinician helps guide patients through the many support services available to residents.

# **GH** President's report

## **Facility Management, Administration and Maintenance**

- Funding to cover operating costs of the health centre is derived primarily through the tenant's lease payments with the exception of a small amount of donations. There is currently no ongoing Government or Health Authority funding other than lease payments for the space actually used by Island Health personnel in the delivery of the health services they provide.
- Additional revenue generated by Island Health's leasing of 2/3 of the UTF as well as the nurse's room, Telehealth and mental health rooms has provided GHCF with additional revenue to contract a significant portion of maintenance work, placing less reliance on volunteers.
- A generous bequest from the estate of former Gabriola artist Mary Gay Brooks, has allowed GHCF to begin building a Health Centre Renewal fund for the purpose of replacing or upgrading all building components including mechanical equipment, computer systems, medical equipment, etc. as they reach the end of their useful lifespans. This significant fund will ensure we have the funds available to ensure the health centre is maintained in top condition and upgraded in the years ahead.

# **G** President's report

## **Facility Management, Administration and Maintenance (contd.)**

- A high priority for GHCF at this time is to contract with an administrator, a bookkeeper and an accountant, each on a part time basis, to relieve the significant workload on the current volunteers which is no longer sustainable or appropriate for a medical facility of this complexity.
- Additional funding will be required to support these positions.
- To help fill this funding shortfall GHCF had anticipated full rental income from the Ministry of Health, or Island Health, for the Urgent Treatment Facility and helipad. Without question the UTF has reduced reliance on busy hospital emergency rooms, contributed to better patient outcomes and resulted in savings to the health system. After a concerted effort by GHCF over the past four years Island Health's lease has now been increased to include 2/3 of the UTF as well as costs associated with the helipad and Telehealth.
- It is time now for GHCF to discuss with the membership and the community how to best achieve the remaining funding required to move forward with the necessary paid management, administration and maintenance functions that the health centre requires.



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## Looking to the future

- The community's goal in 2008 of having a clinic designed to support up to four family physicians complete with an urgent treatment facility and helipad has been achieved!
- Today, in addition to the two physicians, a nurse practitioner, a community health nurse and both a mental health nurse and clinician currently practicing at the clinic, we also have a number of medical specialists who visit the clinic on a regular basis and provide a range of valuable services to patients. The required sharing of space may soon exceed a reasonable limit!
- With Gabriola's aging and growing population, the need for increased team based care and related health services will inevitably result in the need for expanded facilities. The existing health centre is fully utilized!
- The process of determining our future health care requirements, the question of who will both provide, and fund, these health services and how the necessary facilities will be financed requires considerable time, effort and community involvement. These discussions have started!

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## **Gabriola is well served!**

- Without question, the primary health care services on Gabriola have come a long way since 2006.
- Island Health has significantly increased the primary health care services now available to all residents and visitors to Gabriola.
- The Gabriola Medical Clinic has become a very busy family practice and together with the health care professionals from Island Health provides an outstanding model of team-based care for the residents of Gabriola.
- GHCF is very grateful to our doctors who are willing to be on call to treat patients who are in need of urgent medical care in the UTF. It is only with the dedication and caring of these doctors, and with the support of their families, that this excellent service is available to all residents and visitors to Gabriola
- GHCF wishes to thank everyone who has helped make the Gabriola Community Health Centre the success it is today.

## A personal footnote

I have had the great privilege and honour to serve on the GHCF Board of Directors for the last 13 years. Initially as the Chair of the Building Committee and the remaining 10 years as President.

During this exciting time the community came together and built an incredible community health centre. But it was really much more than that. Working together as volunteers, acquaintances were made, understanding and respect grew and lasting friendships were formed. A true community was built! I am proud and humbled to have been a part of that.

I am now retiring from the Board and wish to take this opportunity to thank the great many people in our community who contributed so much, in so many ways, to make 'Our Clinic' the success it is today. It truly could not have been accomplished without everyone who played a role, both large or small.

My most sincere thanks to you all,

Chuck