

For Immediate Release
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Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital Foundation
Carleton Place, ON

Heart Care In A Heartbeat



Denise McIntyre, Telemedicine Coordinator and RN at CPDMH, with patient, Stephen Cross, during a video consultation with cardiologist, Dr. Beanlands

When patients experience a heart attack at the Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital (CPDMH), Dr. Don Beanlands, an Ottawa Heart Institute cardiologist, can help. Semi-urgent consultations may be arranged within a few hours or the next day via a live two-way using CareConnect. Dr. Beanlands and other specialists can assess patients, prescribe medication, and determine which patients should be transported to Ottawa.

Along with these potentially life-saving services, CareConnect's leading telemedicine services also link patients with specialists in non-emergency situations as well - patients like Stephen Cross. Stephen has also had two open-heart surgeries as a result of being born with a mitral valve prolapse that doctors repaired at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. However instead of traveling over an hour each way to Ottawa for his annual check up, Stephen now saves time, money and unnecessary stress by meeting his cardiologist, Dr. Beanlands via CareConnect. In a telemedicine consultation room, Stephen "sees" his specialist by videoconference on the screen.

"The patient is greeted by Dr. Beanlands and a general health discussion takes place. A complete cardiac assessment is done including heart and lung sounds. I use a digital stethoscope that Dr. Beanlands can also hear", stated Denise McIntyre, an RN and the telemedicine coordinator for CPDMH, explaining the CareConnect cardiac assessment. "With the physician, I can also listen to the patient's neck arteries and measure for jugular vein distention. Once the history and physical is complete, the doctor can then ask additional questions, order tests and blood work, adjust medications and counsel patients on their condition."

"I really appreciate how CareConnect lets me see my specialist. My appointments are on time and I can ask instantaneous questions. It's just like being in the same room, without the hassles and wait times. I've never felt rushed," stated Mr. Cross. "Denise is fantastic. She's technically competent and she makes my visits as stress free as possible. Although I still have memories of my previous hospitalizations, Denise helps put me at ease."

For the last three years, Stephen has enjoyed the convenience of a telemedicine visit with his specialist rather than travelling to Ottawa. CareConnect helps especially in winter during snowstorms, ensuring patients do not travel far. As a result, they are less likely to cancel or reschedule their appointments. In 2004, CareConnect helped to bring advanced care to 5,000 patients in close to 50 eastern Ontario locations.

“I love the fact that I can get my annual heart check-up done within an hour and that I can remain close to home. I don’t need to take time off work,” continues Mr. Cross. “I look forward to having many more of my annual checkups using the CareConnect service.”

An innovative part of CareConnect is that it allows specialists to offer regularly-scheduled clinics, offering ongoing support to rural facilities. At CPDMH, there are approximately 20 telemedicine visits each month, mostly for stroke rehabilitation and cardiac and dermatology care. Congestive heart failure and adult and pediatrics mental health has also been added to the list of services that can be accessed through CareConnect at the hospital. To see if telemedicine would help address your health needs please speak with your physician.

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