

Stevenson Memorial receives additional funding from Province

By Brock Weir

Stevenson Memorial Hospital received a welcome boost from the Provincial Government last week, a share of an Ontario-wide \$68 million investment to support small- and medium-sized hospitals.

The funding announcement included a province-wide increase in funding of one per cent for small-sized hospitals and 1.5 per cent for medium-sized hospitals to assist with unique situations and historical funding challenges.

Stevenson (SMH) falls in the medium-sized hospital category and, as such, this one-time 1.5 per cent increase to in-year funding will result in \$241,000.

"This is good news for SMH and I am appreciative of the support from the Ministry of Health and the attention they are giving to the needs of community hospitals," said Jody Levac, President and CEO of SMH in a statement. "We will continue with our efforts to be innovative and implement cost-saving solutions as we work towards a balanced budget for the organization."

The investment includes a further \$2.81 million in increased funding for Collingwood General and Marine Hospital, a move which was heralded by Barrie-area MPPs Doug Downey and Andrea Khanjin.

"Investments like these are helping put an end to hallway healthcare in our province. This funding for small and medium size hospitals will ensure they are better able to serve the people of our community," said Downey. "It will ensure patients in our more rural areas have access to high quality and timely treatment, while also alleviating strain on larger, local facilities as well."

Added Khanjin: "Our focus has been on building a sustainable healthcare system for Ontarians to have confidence in, care that they can trust. This funding will enable Stevenson Memorial and Collingwood General and Marine to provide proper care to patients and assist with putting an end to hallway healthcare."

Ontario has also committed to a province-wide increase in funding of one per cent for 66 small-sized hospitals, 1.5 per cent for 23 medium-sized and multi-site hospitals and targeted funding to assist with unique situations and historical funding challenges.

Ontario will invest \$27 billion over the next 10 years in hospital infrastructure projects across Ontario, including adding 3,000 new hospital beds.

It has been a busy month for SMH. At the start of the month, the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation (SMHF) launched the 'Because of You, We Can!' Capital Campaign. This campaign is the largest in the history of the SMHF in support of the redevelopment project, Health Information System (HIS) and critical equipment needs.

The hospital was also recognized with the 2019 Employer of Excellence Award by the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (RPNAO).

This award recognizes outstanding achievement in the utilization of RPNs across an organization, the creation of multi-disciplinary teams and empowering RPNs to work to the fullest of their knowledge, skill and judgement while maintaining a safe and respectful work environment.

'RPNs play a critical role in patient care at SMH and the leadership that they have exemplified is outstanding,' said Carrie Jeffreys, VP Patient Services and Chief Nursing Executive, SMH. 'It is an honour to receive this prestigious award and recognition from the RPNAO. It is a true reflection of our passionate and dedicated nursing staff.'

'The contributions that our RPNs make to our hospital inspired me to submit a nomination for the award on behalf of SMH,' said Erin Arsenault, RPN. 'I am so proud to be a part of such a skilled group of nurses.'

The award was presented to SMH at the RPNAO's Annual AGM and Conference Gala on Thursday, October 3 at the Four Points Sheraton in London, Ontario.

As the recipient of this award, a cheque for \$500 was also presented.

The RPNAO's CEO, Dianne Martin will now visit SMH to re-present the award, allowing all staff to participate in a celebration.

The RPNAO recently awarded SMH with a \$10,000 grant to implement the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) for Prevention of Delirium. This patient care program ensures optimal care for seniors with a sudden change in mental state and loss of functioning.

With files from Wendy Gabrek