

QEII FOUNDATION

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Neurosurgical Robotic Program to reach Cape Breton

(HALIFAX) Neurosurgeons at the QEII Health Sciences Centre and patients in Cape Breton have much to celebrate today after the announcement of funding for a Remote Presence Neurosurgical Robot for the Cape Breton Regional Hospital through a gift of almost \$400,000 from donor Joe Shannon of Cape Breton to the QEII Foundation. The remote presence robot will enhance patient care by linking physicians and patients in Cape Breton with neurosurgeons at the QEII who will provide emergency neurosurgical consultation for the Cape Breton Regional Hospital.

"This is good news for our District," says John Malcom, CEO of the Cape Breton District Health Authority. "We are very grateful to Mr. Shannon for his generosity. We are also thankful that he recognizes that this is a valuable tool to support the delivery of emergency care here on the Island. It's an exciting innovation and another example of technology complimenting our health care services. It effectively reduces the distance between a patient here in Cape Breton and the Neurosurgeon in Halifax."

Dr. Ivar Mendez, Head of the Division of Neurosurgery at the QEII, and Chairman of the Brain Repair Centre, lauded the remote presence robot as a significant technological development. "This technology will allow us to provide neurosurgical expertise in real-time where neurosurgeons are not available. This will enable us to save crucial time in making decisions for patients who require urgent neurosurgical care in remote locations."

The remote presence robot serves as the neurosurgeon's eyes and ears. From any location with an internet connection, neurosurgeons can connect to it via a laptop computer to assess and diagnose a patient, provide instruction to local physicians and monitor recovery. The QEII Health sciences Centre and the Cape Breton Regional Hospital have the only two telepresence robots in Canada.

The remote presence robot for Cape Breton will impact people like Gerry Gray, a recent neurosurgery patient at the QEII Health Sciences Centre whose access to a remote presence robot was life changing. On September 17, 2007 the robot at the Halifax Infirmary was part of a consultation for surgery to correct a tremor Gerry had experienced in his hands for over 39 years. "The nurse came in and said Dr. Mendez was there. In wheeled the robot with Dr. Mendez's smiling face on the screen. He greeted me with a "good evening Gerry," said Gerry. "After about 30 seconds, the strangeness of it was gone. It didn't matter physically where the doctor was." Through the use of the robot, Dr. Mendez was able to display a photo and illustrate for him where the

neurostimulator implant was destined. "My wife was so amazed. She had some questions and Dr. Mendez was able to answer them right then and there and allay her nervousness. It was an incredible experience," recounts Gerry. Gerry is now tremor free, from a neurological condition which has plagued his father and several brothers. "Other than a battery change every four to five years, I'm good to go."

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